

CLEAR - contact lens technologies of the future

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34 **Keywords**

35 Augmented vision, biosensing, diagnosis, drug delivery, theranostic

36

37 **Acronyms**

38	CE	Conformité Européenne
39	ConA	Concanavalin A
40	DEAA	<i>N,N</i> -diethylacrylamide
41	DED	Dry eye disease
42	Dk/t	Oxygen transmissibility
43	ECP	Eye care professional
44	EGDMA	Ethylenglycol dimethacrylate
45	FDA	Food and Drug Administration
46	HEMA	Poly (2-hydroxyethyl methacrylate)
47	HPMC	Hydroxypropyl methylcellulose
48	IgE	Immunoglobulin E
49	IgG	Immunoglobulin G
50	IL	Interleukin
51	IOP	Intraocular pressure
52	LED	Light emitting diode
53	MAA	Methacrylic acid
54	MMP	Matrix Metalloproteinase
55	PEG	Polyethylene glycol
56	PLGA	Poly (lactic-co-glycolic acid)
57	PMMA	Polymethylmethacrylate
58	PoC	Point-of-care
59	PoLTF	Post-lens tear film
60	ROS	Reactive oxygen species
61	TFOS DEWS II	Tear Film & Ocular Surface Society Dry eye workshop II
62	TNF	Tumor necrosis factor
63	UV	Ultraviolet

64

65 **Abstract**

66 This review examines the use, or potential use, of contact lenses aside from their
67 role to correct refractive error. Contact lenses can be used to detect systemic and
68 ocular surface diseases, treat and manage various ocular conditions and as devices
69 that can correct presbyopia, control the development of myopia or be used for
70 augmented vision. There is also discussion of new developments in contact lens
71 packaging and storage cases.

72

73 The use of contact lenses as devices to detect systemic disease has mostly
74 focussed on detecting changes to glucose levels in tears for monitoring diabetic
75 control. Glucose can be detected using changes in colour, fluorescence or
76 generation of electric signals by embedded sensors such as boronic acid,
77 concanavalin A or glucose oxidase. Contact lenses that have gained regulatory
78 approval can measure changes in intraocular pressure to monitor glaucoma by
79 measuring small changes in corneal shape. Challenges include integrating sensors
80 into contact lenses and detecting the signals generated. Various techniques are
81 used to optimize uptake and release of the drugs to the ocular surface to treat
82 diseases such as dry eye, glaucoma, infection and allergy. Contact lenses that either
83 mechanically or electronically change their shape are being investigated for the
84 management of presbyopia. Contact lenses that slow the development of myopia are
85 based upon incorporating concentric rings of plus power, peripheral optical zone(s)
86 with add power or non-monotonic variations in power. Various forms of these lenses
87 have shown a reduction in myopia in clinical trials and are available in various
88 markets.

89

90 Contact lenses in the future will likely have functions other than correction of
91 refractive error. Lenses designed to control the development of myopia are already
92 commercially available. Contact lenses as drug delivery devices and powered
93 through advancements in nanotechnology will open up further opportunities for
94 unique uses of contact lenses.

95

96

97 **1 Introduction**

98 Contact lenses were invented to correct refractive error and they have become a
99 successful, convenient and widely used commodity for this purpose. However,
100 looking forward into the not-so-distant future, the potential applications for these
101 devices are proliferating to uses where vision correction *per se* is often not the main
102 intention. Industries as far ranging as bio-sensors, pharmaceuticals, defence and the
103 entertainment sector could all potentially apply contact lens-based technologies to
104 achieve solutions to problems for their specific unmet needs. This review will explore
105 some of these innovations and consider how these efforts will change the way
106 contact lenses are used in the future.

107

108 **2 Diagnosis and Screening for Systemic Disease**

109 Historically, the quantification of analytes in the tear film has primarily focused on the
110 diagnosing and monitoring of ocular conditions. However, it is increasingly apparent
111 that the tear film contains a wide range of biomarkers that may help diagnose
112 systemic disease for a range of conditions [1]. A contact lens-based diagnostic
113 device would allow a biosensor to be placed in close proximity to the ocular tissue
114 and be bathed in the tear fluid, which is known to reflect pathophysiological changes
115 in several systemic and ocular diseases, as described in Table 1.

116

117

118 **Table 1:** Systemic disease biomarkers found within the tear film

Disease	Potential tear biomarkers
Alzheimer's disease	Increased levels of dermcidin, lacritin, lipocalin-1 and lysozyme-C [2]
Cancer	Increased levels of lacryglobin [3, 4], changes in combination of specific proteins [5]
Cystic fibrosis	IL-8 and IFN- γ [6], MIP-1 α [7] and MIP-1 β [8]
Diabetes	Increased levels of glucose [9], advanced glycation end products [10], cytokine changes [11]
Multiple sclerosis	Oligoclonal bands of IgG [12, 13] and α -1-antichymotrypsin [14]
Parkinson's disease	TNF- α [15] and oligomeric alpha-synuclein [16]
Thyroid disease	IL-1 β , IL-6, IL-17, TNF- α [17] and IL-7 [18]

119

120 IL – Interleukin; IFN – Interferon; MIP – Macrophage inflammatory protein; TNF – tumor necrosis
 121 factor; IgG – Immunoglobulin G.

122

123 Biochemical tear film sensing technology is rapidly evolving, allowing the
 124 incorporation of either electrochemical or optical sensing technologies into future
 125 diagnostic contact lenses [19]. This approach offers distinct advantages over direct
 126 tear sampling, as a contact lens enables the cumulative detection of biomarkers
 127 during the wearing period, potentially increasing assay sensitivity [20]. In addition, a
 128 range of sensing technologies is now available which could be incorporated into
 129 future diagnostic contact lenses to monitor clinical ophthalmic biomarkers, including
 130 blink tracking [21], eye movement tracking [22], pupillary responses [23] and retinal
 131 vessel pulsation/imaging [24]. In addition, due to the relatively large surface area of
 132 the contact lens, there is potential for multiplexing to monitor various biomarkers at
 133 the same time via a single device [25, 26]. Future research will likely focus on
 134 identifying and refining the key biomarkers for these conditions, establishing the
 135 specificity and sensitivity of the biomarkers for the particular diseases, and
 136 developing tear film capturing and sensing technologies to allow such analysis to be
 137 truly diagnostic. This will allow the potential for simple contact lens-based

138 technologies that could diagnose systemic disease at an earlier stage, allowing
139 prompt management and improved clinical outcomes.

140

141 Two specific examples of research in this area relate to diabetes monitoring via tear
142 film glucose detection and detection of cancer-markers within the tear film.

143

144 **2.1 Diabetes monitoring via tear-film glucose detection**

145 Diabetes, a chronic condition characterised by high levels of blood sugar, affects
146 more than 463 million people worldwide and is on the rise [27]. As there is currently
147 no cure, effective monitoring and control of blood glucose levels are critical in
148 managing the condition and its complications. The gold standard for blood glucose
149 monitoring is the finger-prick method, where a lancet is used to pierce the skin of a
150 finger or another site to obtain a blood sample that is read by a glucose meter. This
151 procedure can cause discomfort and is inconvenient, while also raising the risk of
152 loss of sensation and secondary infection in repeatedly sampled areas [28]. Non-
153 invasive methods for glucose detection have thus been proposed to alleviate these
154 complications and improve patient quality of life.

155

156 The tear fluid is a potential site for non-invasive glucose monitoring due to its relative
157 accessibility. The concentration of tear glucose is higher in diabetics than healthy
158 individuals [9] and several groups have proposed contact lens-based biosensors to
159 measure tear glucose levels [29-41]. This concept would open up the possibility of
160 continuous tear glucose monitoring rather than the “snapshots” which are provided
161 by monitoring through finger prick testing.

162

163 **2.1.1 Mode of detection**

164 Glucose detection using a biosensor can be broadly categorised into either optical or
165 electrochemical methods (see Table 2 for examples).

166

167 **2.1.1.1 *Optical detection methods***

168 For optical detection, the binding of glucose to the sensors typically results in a
169 colourimetric or fluorescence change which is measured using an external reader
170 such as a photodetector or a smartphone. Optical sensors are relatively inexpensive

171 and simple to fabricate since they do not require any additional embedded circuits for
172 power or communication. However, optical detection can be somewhat subjective
173 and prone to errors influenced by elements such as lighting conditions and detector
174 distance.

175

176 **2.1.1.2 Electrochemical detection methods**

177 Electrochemical sensors are more complex, requiring additional micro-components
178 such as a power source, microprocessor and an antenna for external
179 communication. The underlying mechanism of glucose detection in these systems is
180 a redox reaction of glucose by a catalyst into hydrogen peroxide, which is then
181 oxidised at an electrode to release free electrons [42-44]. The free electrons produce
182 an electric current that is proportional to the amount of glucose present in the
183 system. The catalyst can be an enzyme [42-44], a metal [35-37] or another glucose-
184 binding molecule [45].

185

186 The advantages of the electrochemical approach is that these systems are highly
187 accurate and can provide continuous and seamless real-time monitoring of tear
188 glucose. The challenge of such a system lies in methods harnessing the electric
189 current, translating it into a quantifiable signal and creating the accessory micro-
190 components to an electrochemical sensor. Previous work has discussed the
191 development of a contact lens platform that coupled the current from the glucose
192 sensor with an antenna and microprocessor [29, 30, 46]. This system was powered
193 entirely wirelessly using radio frequencies, solving the difficulties involved with
194 powering the individual micro-components [29, 30, 46]. This concept spurred several
195 startup companies that have tried to develop a so-called “smart” glucose contact
196 lens, the most prominent example being led by the tech giant Google (Mountain
197 View, CA, USA) in 2014, followed later by a collaboration between Google and
198 Novartis (Basel, Switzerland) [34].

199

200 **2.1.2 Glucose sensor types**

201 Several forms of glucose-sensors exist in the contact lens-based glucose sensors
202 proposed (see Table 2 for examples).

203

204 **2.1.2.1 Boronic acid-based glucose sensors**

205 Boronic acids reversibly bind to carbohydrates, particularly diol-containing molecules
206 such as glucose. These acids have unique optical properties when bound to glucose,
207 resulting in a colourimetric or fluorescence change, depending on the specific
208 boronic acid derivative used [47, 48].

209

210 **2.1.2.2 Concanavalin A-based glucose sensors**

211 Concanavalin A (ConA) is a lectin or carbohydrate binding protein. A ConA
212 competitive binding assay biosensor has been applied to a contact lens system [32,
213 49]. In the absence of glucose, ConA is bound to a ligand, such as fluorescein-
214 labelled dextran and produces minimal fluorescence [32, 49]. In the presence of
215 glucose, the ligand is displaced and glucose instead binds to ConA, resulting in an
216 increase in fluorescence related to the amount of glucose present, with the change in
217 fluorescence measured using a handheld fluorometer [32, 49, 50].

218

219 **2.1.2.3 Enzymatic glucose sensors**

220 Enzymatic detection of glucose by glucose oxidase, which specifically targets
221 glucose, has both high sensitivity and selectivity [35, 51]. In the presence of water
222 and oxygen, the enzyme converts glucose to gluconic acid and hydrogen peroxide.
223 The hydrogen peroxide is then oxidised at the anode of an electrochemical probe to
224 produce a current corresponding to the amount of glucose in solution [51].

225

226 The significant advantage of enzymatic sensors lies in their specificity for the
227 molecule in question, but a challenge lies in the integration of the microelectronic
228 components into a contact lens platform. Other drawbacks relate to stability,
229 especially for long term storage [35, 43] and that the sterilisation methods typically
230 used by the contact lens industry (such as autoclaving) will generally denature the
231 enzymes.

232

233 **2.1.2.4 Metal-based glucose sensors**

234 The stability problems associated with enzymatic sensors can be overcome by using
235 metals such as platinum [35], gold [37], copper oxide [36], zinc or nickel oxide [52]
236 and molybdenum disulfide [53]. However, these sensors are less specific and
237 sensitive to glucose than enzymes such as glucose oxidase.

238

239 **2.1.3 Challenges to contact lens-based glucose sensors**

240 Aside from the technical challenges associated with integrating a glucose sensor
241 (whether optical or electrochemical) into a contact lens, other issues also challenge
242 the viability of these devices. There is approximately 20 minutes lag time between
243 changes in blood glucose and tear glucose levels [54-56]. For patients with insulin-
244 dependent diabetes that require real-time information to accurately calculate and
245 administer insulin to avoid hyper- and hypo-glycemia, the discordance between tear
246 and blood glucose levels [57, 58] may be fatal. Thus, for severe diabetics, a contact
247 lens-based glucose sensor which only measures levels of glucose in the tears may
248 not be relied upon as the only glucose monitoring device. There will also be market
249 challenges related to the adoption of these smart contact lenses, due to their cost
250 and practicality, in addition to regulatory hurdles to obtain approval for the use of
251 such diagnostic devices. The initial hype towards the commercialisation of a contact
252 lens-based glucose sensor has waned since Google and Novartis put aside their
253 joint venture in 2018, citing a variety of technical challenges [59]. However, the
254 outlook remains positive as the fields of biosensors, microelectronics and
255 nanotechnology continually advance and converge.

256

257 Table 2: Examples of glucose biosensors developed for contact lenses

Mode of detection	Glucose sensor	Reader
Fluorescence [60]	Boronic acid, Concanavalin A	External detector
Colourimetric [47]	Boronic acid	Colour chart
Fluorescence [61]	Boronic acid	Photodetector
Fluorescence, colourimetric [62]	Boronic acid, Concanavalin A	External detector
Fluorescence, colourimetric [63]	Boronic acid, Concanavalin A	Photodetector
Fluorescence [64]	Boronic acid, Concanavalin A	External detector
Light emitted [65]	Boronic acid	Photodetector
Electrochemical [45]	Boronic acid	Electrode

Fluorescence, luminescence [66]	Boronic acid	External reader
Light emitted [31]	Boronic acid	Smart phone
Optical [33]	Boronic acid	External reader
Absorbance [50]	Concanavalin A	Spectrophotometer
Fluorescence [49]	Concanavalin A	Handheld photofluorometer
Fluorescence [32]	Concanavalin A	Handheld photofluorometer
Electrochemical [46]	Glucose oxidase	Electrode
Electrochemical [29]	Glucose oxidase	Smart phone
Electrochemical [30]	Glucose oxidase	Handheld reader or smart phone
Electrochemical [67]	Glucose oxidase	External receiver
Electrochemical [38]	Glucose oxidase	On lens display
Electrochemical [68]	Metal oxides	External receiver

258

259 **2.2 Cancer detection**

260 The tear film is well suited to the detection of cancer biomarkers as it is less
 261 biologically complex than blood [69, 70] and tear sampling is also relatively non-
 262 invasive compared with collecting blood samples.

263

264 Early work in tear film cancer detection highlighted the presence of a tear film protein
 265 called lacryglobin [71] that has similarities to mammaglobins upregulated in breast
 266 cancer [72]. Lacryglobin is present in the tear film of patients with colon, lung, breast
 267 and prostate cancer, as well as patients with a family history of cancer [3]. A protein
 268 analogous to lacryglobin is also present in the tear film of dogs suffering from a
 269 range of cancers [4]. Lebrecht and colleagues used time-of-flight mass spectroscopy
 270 to compare the tear film of cancer patients and healthy controls, identifying
 271 differences in 20 tear film biomarkers [73-75].

272

273 Contact lens technology may play a key role in offering a platform for sensing these
274 cancer biomarkers, either via a direct measurement using an electronically-active
275 biosensor mounted on a contact lens [76] or by the natural accumulation of tear
276 components within a contact lens material during wear, which could then be
277 analysed following contact lens removal. Such contact lens-based technology would
278 allow early diagnosis, improved monitoring and gauge susceptibility to a range of
279 cancers, aiding the clinician in providing improved patient care.

280

281 **3 Diagnosis and Screening for Ocular Disease**

282 **3.1 Intraocular pressure monitoring for glaucoma**

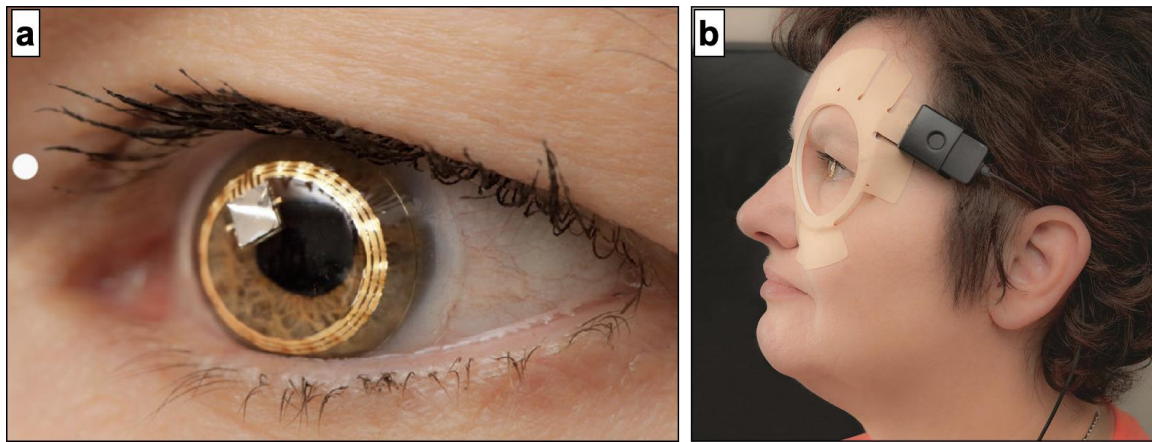
283 Glaucoma is a leading cause of blindness globally and thus developments in
284 improving intraocular pressure (IOP) monitoring are of great interest to clinicians.
285 However, methods of measuring IOP in clinical practice are suboptimal and do not
286 reflect its dynamic nature, including its circadian variation and short-term fluctuations
287 [77]. Current gold standard tonometry techniques provide an estimate of the IOP
288 only over a matter of seconds, are generally only available during typical clinic hours
289 and take the reading in an upright, seated position. However, studies have
290 suggested that large IOP fluctuations, in particular nocturnal pressure spikes not
291 captured with conventional tonometry, could have a direct impact on glaucoma
292 progression [78, 79]. The use of continuous monitoring over a 24-hour period would
293 therefore provide a more holistic description of the patient's IOP profile and contact
294 lens sensors have been suggested as a suitable vehicle for this purpose [80].

295

296 **3.1.1 Contact lens-based devices to monitor IOP**

297 The Triggerfish contact lens sensor (Sensimed, Switzerland) (Figure 1) is a
298 commercially available contact lens device that permits extended monitoring of IOP.
299 This flexible silicone-based contact lens was first described in 2004 [81] and has
300 received both CE marking and FDA approval for 24-hour measurement of IOP.
301 Rather than measuring IOP directly, the device measures minute dimensional
302 changes in corneal shape, which correspond to changes in ocular biomechanical
303 properties and volume, as well as IOP [82]. This is based on the principle that a
304 change in IOP of 1 mmHg elicits a change in corneal curvature of 3 μm , for an
305 average corneal radius of 7.8 mm [82, 83]. Initial results demonstrated good

306 reliability of the device during ocular pulsation and against known induced IOP
307 changes in porcine eyes [83].
308



309
310 Figure 1. (a) Contact lens sensor (SENSIMED Triggerfish) on the eye; (b) The
311 sensor transmits the information gathered when in situ to an antenna, which is
312 connected to a portable recorder. (Sensimed AG).

313
314 The Triggerfish device has an embedded circumferential sensor consisting of two
315 strain gauges that measure dimensional change. The gauges sit in a circular arc of
316 11.5 mm diameter, which is the typical position of the corneo-scleral junction, where
317 maximal corneal deformation due to IOP change is assumed to occur [80].

318 Measurements are recorded for 30 second periods every 5 minutes during wear,
319 providing 288 datapoints over a 24-hour period [82]. The readings are transmitted
320 wirelessly to an adhesive antenna patch placed around the eye and then through a
321 wired connection to the portable receiver worn by the patient. Since the device is
322 wearable, the patient can perform their daily activities as normal with minimal
323 interruption, although device instructions suggest avoiding driving and contact with
324 water. The device is available in three base curves to aid in achieving an appropriate
325 fit and has an oxygen transmissibility (Dk/t) of 119 units to facilitate overnight wear.

326
327 Many clinical studies have demonstrated that the Triggerfish device has good safety
328 and tolerability in both healthy and glaucomatous eyes [82, 84-87]. The most
329 common adverse effects seen in clinical trials include transient blurred vision,
330 conjunctival hyperaemia and superficial punctate keratitis. These mild effects are
331 common, being present in up to 95% of wearers [82, 85], but typically resolve within

332 24-48 hours. A reduction in best corrected visual acuity during and after wear has
333 been noted, possibly due to orthokeratologic effects of intentionally tight-fitting lenses
334 (to minimise lens mobility) [88, 89]. Studies report that the device captures
335 reproducible 24-hour IOP profiles [90-92], although its validity in estimating IOP
336 remains unknown [93]. The device outputs measurement in 'mV equivalent' units,
337 which are relative to its initial baseline measurement. These outputs are not
338 comparable to tonometric measurements in mmHg, making direct evaluation of
339 accuracy difficult [90] and further work is warranted to explore the accuracy of the
340 device and its relationship with conventional IOP measurement. Continuous IOP
341 monitoring has enabled further investigation of several factors beyond what is
342 possible with conventional measurement techniques, including the effects of topical
343 medication and surgical interventions, certain activities and body position (e.g.
344 supine versus seated), and circadian rhythm [80].

345

346 The Triggerfish is likely to be the first in a generation of commercially available
347 contact lens-based devices to monitor ocular biomarkers of disease. However, there
348 are a number of limitations with the current device, principally driven by the bulky
349 microprocessor and strain gauge assembly, which when encapsulated within the
350 contact lens results in a 325 μm centre thickness, which is 2 to 3 times thicker than a
351 typical contact lens. Consequently, to ensure sufficient oxygen is able to pass
352 through the lens, particularly during overnight wear, the lens is manufactured from a
353 highly oxygen permeable silicone elastomer material. This combination of a thick
354 lens and relatively stiff material may potentially negatively impact the sensitivity of
355 the strain gauge system and comfort during wear [94]. The need for an external
356 adhesive patch to power and monitor the system would also ideally be addressed in
357 a less obtrusive manner, either by integration into a spectacle frame or by on-lens
358 power systems.

359

360 These limitations have led to a range of different technologies being studied in order
361 to develop future systems that are less invasive and more effective at monitoring
362 IOP. A metal strain gauge electrode with an integrated Wheatstone bridge circuit has
363 been developed allowing a thinner lens design and improved sensitivity, although it
364 lacks integration of the control electronics or aerial and evaluation was limited to
365 laboratory testing only [95]. The use of a flexible, highly piezoresistive organic bilayer

366 film sensor has been proposed, which was reported to improve sensitivity to the
367 subtle changes in ocular surface curvature (3-10 times greater sensitivity in
368 comparison with metal strain gauges) [96]. The prototype film sensor was mounted
369 on a rigid contact lens annulus with a wired connection to the external monitoring
370 equipment. Evaluation in a laboratory and clinical setting (single participant)
371 highlighted the ability of the system to monitor change in IOP. The incorporation of a
372 graphene woven fabric into a contact lens has been described [97], demonstrating
373 excellent sensitivity to ocular surface deformation due to large changes in resistivity
374 in the stretchable fabric when IOP changes altered corneal curvature. The graphene
375 woven fabric material was also reported to have reasonable transparency and
376 biocompatibility, although evaluation was limited to laboratory testing with tethered
377 resistance measurements.

378

379 An alternative to monitoring IOP with resistive strain sensors is the use of capacitive
380 sensors, which are generally thought to have a higher sensitivity and lower power
381 consumption [98]. These sensors monitor subtle changes in corneal curvature by
382 measuring the resulting change in capacitance due to altered capacitive gap
383 spacing. When combined with an inductor, this change in capacitance influences its
384 resonant frequency allowing this passive device to be read wirelessly [99]. In
385 addition, capacitive sensors are more compact, with a lens thickness of around 100
386 μm achievable [100]. Graphene-silver nanowire technology has been used to form a
387 capacitance sensor within a silicone elastomer contact lens [99]. Recently, a passive
388 doughnut-shaped IOP sensor has been developed which consists of a
389 microfabricated capacitor and variable inductor (in the form of a stretchable
390 serpentine wire) that serves as both the sensor and antenna [101]. Near field
391 electromagnetic coupling is used to wirelessly monitor the resonant frequency of the
392 sensor, enabling continuous monitoring of change in corneal curvature induced by
393 IOP variation. This relatively simple passive device avoids the need for lens-mounted
394 electronic chips, with laboratory testing suggesting good sensitivity, although the
395 authors are yet to report on any clinical evaluation.

396

397 With many of these IOP monitoring systems, an obvious limitation is that the sensor
398 measures changes in corneal curvature as a proxy for IOP. This means that the
399 measurements are dependent on the biomechanical properties of the human eye

400 and their output is not a direct measure of pressure. In an attempt to address this, a
401 novel IOP sensing contact lens has been developed which operates on the basis of
402 applanation rather than topographical change [102]. This silicone hydrogel lens
403 contains a capacitive pressure sensor mounted into an annular recess in the mid-
404 periphery of the lens. This annular recess causes the underlying portion of the lens
405 to protrude and experience a reactive deformation when pressed into the cornea by
406 the blinking action of the lids or during sleep. The deformation is detected by the
407 capacitive sensor and wirelessly monitored by a portable external controller. This
408 system is claimed to provide profiles of IOP change in actual pressure values
409 (mmHg) and is reportedly less influenced by the mechanical behavior of the cornea
410 and the sclera [103]. The system has undergone pilot clinical testing, with the device
411 reported to be able to track IOP changes whilst causing only low levels of discomfort
412 [104].

413

414 Due to the complexity of integrating electronics within a contact lens, microfluidic and
415 optical technologies have also been considered. Microfluidic contact lenses typically
416 contain a network of enclosed microchannels, with a fluid level indicator that tracks
417 changes in internal volume due to variations in corneal curvature or IOP. It is
418 envisaged that these microfluidic IOP sensors could be read directly by the clinician
419 or imaged using a mobile phone camera [105, 106]. An alternative approach is
420 based on the generation of optical nanostructures using laser processing on a
421 commercial contact lens, which forms a holographic optical sensor [107]. This type of
422 sensor would be read by observing the spectral shift of reflected light due to changes
423 in corneal curvature or IOP [105, 106]. Although these optical and microfluidic
424 sensors lack the ability to track IOP during sleep or on a continuous basis, their
425 relative simplicity may allow for more rapid sensor development and a lower cost
426 device than electronically active systems [105].

427

428 Rapid progress is being made in developing a broad range of biosensing
429 technologies to support the development of biocompatible minimally invasive contact
430 lens for IOP monitoring. However, with the exception of the Sensimed Triggerfish
431 lens, many of the proposed sensors have had limited, if any, clinical evaluation. This
432 likely relates to (i) the complexity of integrating electronics within a contact lens, (ii)
433 the early stage of development of many of these new sensors and (iii) the costs

434 associated with medical device development and clinical evaluation. However, the
435 latest IOP sensor technology from Sensimed AG (known as “Goldfish”
436 (Clinicaltrials.gov number: NCT03689088)), highlights continuous monitoring of IOP
437 in humans over a 24-hour period [108] using a micro-electro-mechanical system
438 pressure sensor technology, offering an exciting glimpse into the potential impact
439 contact lens-based technology could have on the future of glaucoma diagnosis and
440 management.

441

442 **3.2 Dry eye disease diagnosis and monitoring**

443 The diagnostic approach proposed for confirmation of dry eye disease (DED) in the
444 TFOS DEWS II report involves a screening questionnaire and measurement of
445 various homeostasis markers, including non-invasive tear break-up time, tear film
446 osmolarity and ocular surface staining [109]. Due to the placement of contact lenses
447 on the ocular surface, contact lens-related technology has the potential to provide
448 additional clinical information to aid in the diagnosis and monitoring of DED. A full
449 description of the ocular surface anatomy, which may be useful to refer to, is given in
450 the CLEAR Anatomy and Physiology of the Anterior Eye report [110].

451

452 **3.2.1 Osmolarity**

453 Tear film osmolarity is an important tool in the diagnosis and management of DED
454 [109, 111]. Point-of-care (PoC) osmometers, based on lab-on-a-chip technology, are
455 now available that measure the osmolarity of microscopic tear film samples using
456 electrical impedance [112]. Given the importance of osmolarity to the development of
457 DED, a number of research groups have studied the feasibility of measuring this via
458 contact lens technology. Researchers have developed a prototype contact lens
459 which can evaluate tear osmolarity, tear evaporation rate and ocular surface
460 temperature [113]. The authors aim to apply this technology in a clinical setting to
461 assist in DED diagnosis, evaluate the effectiveness of clinical treatments and monitor
462 clinical performance. This approach has the advantage of providing a continuous
463 assessment of these clinical metrics. However, it is relatively complex, requiring
464 external power induction and the integration of complex electronics within the contact
465 lens.

466

467 An alternative approach to determining the electrolyte composition of the tear film
468 uses coloured or fluorescent dyes that are integrated within the contact lens material.
469 A microfluidics system has been developed [26], where a number of fluorescent
470 chemical sensors were multiplexed in cavities engraved into a scleral lens. A
471 handheld fluorescence imaging device was also developed to read the sensors and
472 provide quantitative measurements. A similar approach has been used [25], where a
473 hydrophobic ion-sensitive fluorophore was bound into commercial silicone hydrogel
474 lenses, allowing individual ion concentrations in tears to be quantified. These
475 fluorophore-based systems appear to avoid much of the complexity of an electronic
476 sensor approach and are more specific about the concentration of each ionic species
477 in tears than conventional osmometers. However, significant clinical work is required
478 to better understand how these sensors would work in the chemically complex tear
479 film environment, to review the safety of these dyes in a clinical setting and to
480 understand how these dyes might otherwise influence clinical performance.

481

482 Finally, holographic grating sensors, which have previously been used to monitor
483 analytes such as metal ions, glucose, water content and pH, have also been
484 proposed as contact lens osmolarity sensors [47, 114-117]. When a holographic
485 sensor comes into contact with its analyte, the polymer within the sensor grows or
486 shrinks, resulting in a change in the colour of the hologram (with the wavelength of
487 the reflected light proportional to the analyte concentration). Holographic sensors
488 can be produced on a commercial contact lens by direct laser processing for the
489 sensing of sodium ion concentrations [107]. This approach is appealing as these
490 sensors are purely optical, relatively low cost, compatible with hydrogel lens
491 materials and require no complex electronics. However, they are yet to undergo any
492 significant clinical evaluation and it is not fully understood how they are likely to
493 perform in the biologically complex tear film environment.

494

495 **3.2.2 Inflammatory cytokines and other biomarkers**

496 In DED, a range of cytokines/chemokines are elevated in the tears, including TNF- α ,
497 IL-6, IL-17a and IL-8 [118]. Although no contact lens-integrated cytokine sensor
498 currently exists, the feasibility of integrating antibody functionalised sensors into thin
499 flexible polymer membranes for continuous studying of analytes (in this case

500 monitoring IL-6 using a wearable diagnostic sweat biosensor) has been described
501 [119]. This type of technology, integrated into a contact lens, would allow the
502 development of a continuous monitoring system for tear film cytokines, in addition to
503 PoC diagnostics, both potentially useful tools in the diagnosis and monitoring of
504 DED, contact lens discomfort and other ocular surface diseases.

505

506 Immunoglobulin proteins found in the tears are also known to vary in concentration in
507 a range of ocular surface diseases [120-123]. Optical biosensing, using a photonic
508 nonporous crystal structure within a hydrogel, has been described for use in the
509 detection of IgG antibodies [124]. The binding of IgG to these photonic sensors
510 results in a refractive index change, with a change in colour from green to red with
511 increasing IgG concentration. This type of photonic crystal sensor is simple, low-
512 cost, label-free and requires a simple imaging system for the detection of
513 immunoglobulin proteins, meaning that it is well suited to PoC testing. This
514 technology could also potentially be integrated into contact lenses to form wearable
515 biosensors [124], although improvements in sensor sensitivity may be required to
516 detect trace amounts of biomarkers within tears [19], unless changes in the
517 concentration of sIgA are diagnostic, as this is in relatively high concentration in
518 tears [125].

519

520 An alternative approach for tear film biosensing is the use of contact lenses to collect
521 biomarkers for PoC diagnostics. An example of this approach is the development of
522 a portable reader to quantify lysozyme, using a contact lens as the sample collector
523 [126]. An example of this system has been described in the literature, where a
524 balafilcon A lens was worn for 15 minutes and then washed in a microtube
525 containing a reaction buffer. The lens was then discarded and the solution mixed
526 with a fluorophore, with the fluorescence monitored over time using a mobile phone-
527 based well-plate reader. The presence of lysozyme in this assay reduces the degree
528 of fluorophore quenching, with the degree of fluorescence proportional to the activity
529 of lysozyme. This type of PoC technology could enable the clinician to diagnose and
530 monitor diseases such as dry eye or Sjögren's syndrome, where reduced
531 concentrations of tear film proteins such as lactoferrin and lysozyme occur [127]. In
532 addition, this technique could be adapted to detect the presence of pathogens such

533 as *Staphylococcus aureus*, viruses that cause conjunctivitis or *Acanthamoeba* [126].
534 Indeed, it may be that the material and/or design of a contact lens could specifically
535 be developed to extract analytes of interest from the tear film, particularly where they
536 are present in only trace quantities. This PoC approach has the potential for
537 advanced health diagnosis and monitoring and for personalised medicine-related
538 applications.

539

540 **3.2.3 Blink monitoring, material dehydration and ocular surface temperature**

541 Blinking frequency and completeness are known change during contact lens wear
542 [128] but are also important clinical metrics in the diagnosis and management of both
543 DED and contact lens discomfort [129-131]. Although blinking can be studied in a
544 clinical setting, the integration of a blink sensor within a contact lens would allow
545 continuous monitoring of blink dynamics whilst undertaking real-world activities. In
546 addition to IOP monitoring, the commercially available Sensimed Triggerfish lens has
547 been reported to be capable of tracking basic blinking characteristics during lens
548 wear, due to a spike in resistance associated with blinking [132]. However, the
549 increased thickness and modulus, and the invasive nature of the external antennae
550 are likely to interfere with natural blinking dynamics. A contact lens-based blink
551 monitoring system has been described [21], where transient reductions in light falling
552 on an integrated photo-sensor would allow the frequency and completeness of eyelid
553 blinking to be monitored, although this idea currently appears to be only conceptual
554 in nature.

555

556 Another technology with potential application in diagnosing and monitoring DED is a
557 structurally coloured contact lens sensor to detect changes in moisture and pressure
558 by altering its colour [133]. These lenses were manufactured by dispensing silica
559 particles onto the concave section of the contact lens mould, forming a highly
560 ordered ring-like crystalline template, which was then polymerised into a hydrogel
561 contact lens material. The contact lens was then placed in acid to etch the silica
562 particles and subsequently washed with deionised water. The resulting contact lens
563 had an inverse opal structure and displayed brilliant colour in the lens periphery.
564 During material dehydration, polymer shrinkage reduces the spacing of the inverse
565 opal structures, with the lens periphery displaying a visible shift in colour, which can
566 be quantified using a spectrophotometer. In addition, the material is sensitive to

567 pressure, due to the associated decrease in structure spacing, leading to a decrease
568 in the reflectance wavelength. This may have diagnostic value in highlighting surface
569 desiccation and/or increased pressure applied to the contact lens due to inadequate
570 lubrication in DED (in addition to the potential of monitoring IOP). Although these
571 devices have yet to undergo clinical testing, their simple approach to measuring the
572 variation in hydration and pressure, suggests that this type of sensor holds promise
573 for PoC diagnosis and monitoring of conditions such as DED and contact lens
574 discomfort.

575

576 Ocular surface temperature has also been studied in relation to DED, as an unstable
577 tear film is thought to increase tear film evaporation, resulting in a relative cooling of
578 the ocular surface [134-137]. An optical temperature sensor has been developed,
579 where temperature-sensitive liquid crystals incorporated into a contact lens exhibited
580 a fully reversible temperature-dependent colour change [138]. An alternative
581 approach [139] relates to the incorporation of an electronic temperature sensor into a
582 contact lens, with the change in temperature over the interblink period reported to be
583 useful in diagnosing DED. Depending on the placement of these sensors, it may be
584 possible to independently sample the temperature of the underlying ocular surface
585 (which is potentially raised in DED due to inflammation) and the temperature at the
586 contact lens/pre-lens tear film interface (which is potentially reduced in DED due to
587 evaporative cooling).

588

589 **3.3 Monitoring of ocular vasculature**

590 Monitoring of the vascular system is critically important in the medical management
591 of a wide range of health conditions. Historically, devices to measure characteristics
592 such as heart rate, oxygen saturation and the hyperaemic response of tissue were
593 medical instruments, but this technology is increasingly being found in consumer
594 technology, such as mobile phones and wearable technology. The eye is an ideal
595 site to monitor the vascular system, as it allows an unobstructed view of the blood
596 vessels in both the retina and conjunctiva.

597

598 **3.3.1 Retinal vasculature**

599 Typically, retinal imaging is performed using ophthalmic instrumentation in a clinical
600 setting, but a recent patent [140] has proposed the incorporation of an ultrasonic
601 transducer within a contact lens to allow retinal vascular imaging during wear. This
602 patent describes the incorporation of an annular ring within a contact lens, which
603 would contain the power system, control electronics and a piezoelectric element,
604 whilst allowing the central portion of the lens to be transparent. The device would
605 emit an ultrasonic pulse that would travel through the ocular media towards the
606 retina. The returned ultrasonic signal would then detect pulsation of the retinal
607 vessels and generate an image of these vessels. It is primarily envisaged that this
608 technology would be applied to monitor general vascular health, with warnings
609 provided to the wearer if the device detected a cardiac rhythm and/or rate of blood
610 vessel displacement outside of a normal range. The patent also discusses its
611 potential for monitoring ocular disease by analysing specific regions of the retinal
612 vasculature, such as the macula or optic nerve head. Such data could either be
613 continuously logged for later review by the clinician, provide live alerts to the wearer
614 (either wirelessly or via an audio/visual alert via micro-acoustic/micro-phonic
615 elements) or communicate directly with a concurrent drug delivery apparatus.
616 Although there are numerous technical challenges in developing such a system and
617 the patent seems to report on a concept rather than a working model, it does
618 highlight the potential for an electronically active contact lens to monitor retinal
619 vasculature.

620

621 **3.3.2 Conjunctival response to contact lens wear**

622 Conjunctival blood vessels are typically evaluated during an ophthalmic examination,
623 with hyperaemia associated with ocular disease, inflammation and irritation [141]. A
624 patent describes the incorporation of an optical sensor within a contact lens, which
625 emits light onto the conjunctiva to allow detection of characteristics such as pulse
626 rate and blood oxygen levels [142]. Although the proposed device is primarily
627 intended for monitoring systemic vascular characteristics, this type of device has a
628 range of potential uses in monitoring ocular health, including detecting hyperaemia of
629 the bulbar and/or tarsal conjunctiva. Monitoring hyperaemia in a continuous fashion
630 would allow a clinician to review changes in vasculature over a prolonged period of
631 time to more appropriately manage a range of clinical conditions, including allergic

632 conjunctivitis, DED, uveitis and contact lens complications. In addition, the device
633 could either highlight to the lens wearer if hyperaemia was detected (via a visual or
634 auditory stimulus [142]), could prompt a consultation with their eyecare practitioner
635 (ECP), or act as a trigger to dispense a therapeutic agent from a drug-delivering
636 contact lens.

637

638 The range of approaches and technologies currently being studied as potential
639 contact lens and PoC biosensors highlights the huge interest in the area. These
640 biosensors, however, should not necessarily be viewed as independent
641 technologies, as it is likely that many of these sensors provide complementary
642 information and, in the future, these differing technologies may be brought together
643 into a single diagnostic lens, with the capability to monitor a wide range of
644 characteristics. Alternatively, key biosensors may be incorporated into standard
645 contact lenses as a routine feature of the lens, such as is now the case with
646 ultraviolet (UV) blockers or lens inversion indicators.

647

648 **4 Treatment and Management of Ocular Conditions**

649 The use of contact lenses in the treatment and management of ocular diseases is a
650 relatively routine part of clinical practice. From providing pain relief in cases of
651 corneal abrasion, corneal protection for trichiasis, to promotion of wound healing in
652 neurotrophic keratitis, contact lenses are employed by clinicians for a broad variety
653 of anterior segment conditions. However, the application of contact lenses for
654 disease indications beyond what is currently undertaken in clinical practice has been
655 a subject of significant research. The CLEAR Medical Use of Contact Lenses report
656 provides a detailed review of the use of other aspects related to this section [143].

657

658 **4.1 Dry eye disease**

659 Dry eye disease is one of the most common conditions managed by ECPs and some
660 novel contact lens options offer alternatives to the use of traditional therapies such
661 as ocular lubricants. However, to date all of the options described have little, if any,
662 clinical data to support their use in the management of DED and further clinical
663 studies are required.

664

665 **4.1.1 Dehydration resistant materials**

666 A novel approach to avoiding ocular surface desiccation is the use of electro-osmotic
667 flow [144]. This involves using an ionic contact lens material (such as a
668 HEMA/methacrylic acid (MAA) copolymer), which serves as the fluid conduit for
669 electro-osmotic flow generation. The placement of an arcuate anode and cathode in
670 the lens surface allows an upward electro-osmotic flow of tear fluid within the contact
671 lens when an electrical current is applied. This electrical current could be applied
672 either by wireless induction or using biocompatible battery technology. The
673 laboratory prototype described appears able to compensate for evaporative water
674 loss and maintain post-lens tear film thickness by driving fluid flow through the lens
675 material.

676

677 Another potential method to minimise dehydration is based around the use of an
678 ultra-thin graphene layer on the anterior lens surface [145]. Graphene has long been
679 hailed as a ‘wonder material’ and its possible uses in the field of contact lenses
680 include its potential to act as an electromagnetic interference shield [145], as a clear
681 flexible electrical conductor [146, 147], as a means to enhance contact lens night
682 vision [148] and as an antimicrobial material [149]. In its application to combat
683 desiccation, the applied graphene layer is proposed to act as a barrier to water loss
684 from the contact lens material. In DED, the ocular surface typically shows signs of
685 desiccation due to an unstable tear film, infrequent /incomplete blinking and
686 subsequent air exposure [150]. Therefore, an engineered material that is resistant to
687 dehydration does offer a potential solution.

688

689 **4.1.2 Lacrimal gland stimulation**

690 An alternative approach to the treatment of DED focuses on increasing tear
691 production by incorporation of an electrical stimulator into a contact lens. This
692 concept is based on a similar intranasal stimulator technology (TrueTear, Allergan,
693 CA, USA) which delivers an intranasal electrical stimulus to stimulate tearing [151]
694 and promote goblet cell secretion [152]. A recent patent highlighted the potential for
695 this type of technology to be manufactured in the form of a contact lens [153]. The
696 patent details the incorporation of a stimulator chip, which would generate an electric
697 waveform to stimulate the cornea, conjunctiva and/or sub-conjunctiva, resulting in
698 activation of reflex pathways and an associated increase in tear production [153].

699 The proposed design is envisaged to receive energy wirelessly from an external
700 power source, potentially in the form of an external infrared light source and a
701 contact lens mounted photodiode. To date, this appears to be conceptual, with no
702 publicly available clinical studies. It is unclear whether such technology would
703 produce a sub-threshold stimulus or whether the stimulus would be felt by the
704 wearer, as is the case with the TrueTear stimulator, and whether the stimulus would
705 be continuous or intermittent. Clinical evidence does support this neurostimulation
706 approach to enhancing tear secretions [151, 152] and therefore if a compact and
707 comfortable contact lens-based treatment could be developed this would be exciting
708 technology, offering an alternative option to new and existing contact lens wearers
709 struggling with dryness symptoms.

710

711 **4.1.3 Scavenging of reactive oxygen species and matrix metalloproteinases**

712 Oxidative stress and the presence of reactive oxygen species (ROS) at the ocular
713 surface have been proposed to play an important role in the development of DED
714 [154, 155] and studies have indicated that decreasing ROS at the ocular surface is a
715 potential treatment strategy [156, 157]. However, eye drop-based ROS-
716 scavenging/antioxidant therapeutics are likely to be rapidly eliminated from the
717 ocular surface [158] and require frequent reapplication [157]. A soft contact lens
718 which incorporates Ceria nanoparticles [159], which are used for their known ROS-
719 scavenging properties [160], has recently been described. Unlike antioxidant
720 therapeutic drops that can potentially act on intracellular ROS, these antioxidant
721 nanoparticles are tightly embedded within the lens matrix, exhibiting their effects
722 through the reduction of extracellular ROS levels. These lenses exhibited good
723 transparency, biocompatibility and effective extracellular ROS-scavenging properties
724 in an ocular surface animal model [159].

725

726 Another group of biomarkers commonly observed in ocular surface disease are the
727 Matrix Metalloproteinases (MMPs) and a potential treatment in these conditions is
728 the topical application of MMP inhibitors [161]. A hydrogel material containing
729 dipicolylamine, which has a high affinity for zinc ions has been developed [162].
730 Sequestering of zinc results in a loss of essential ions from MMPs, resulting in their
731 deactivation and this technology has the potential to treat conditions associated with

732 excessive MMP activation, such as that found with increased amounts of MMP-9 in
733 DED [163-165].

734

735 **4.2 Limbal stem cell deficiency**

736 An intact and healthy corneal epithelium is required to achieve an effective barrier
737 against infection and maintain the transparency required for clear vision. To achieve
738 this, the epithelium is continuously regenerated by the limbal epithelial stem cells.

739 Destruction of the stem cell niche in conjunction with dysfunction or depletion of the
740 limbal epithelial stem cells, through trauma or conditions such as aniridia, leads to
741 limbal stem cell deficiency, a debilitating condition characterised by painful chronic
742 ulceration, inflammation and vascularisation of the cornea. Limbal stem cell
743 deficiency may be managed by using scleral lenses, as outlined in the CLEAR
744 Scleral lenses and CLEAR Medical use of Contact Lenses reports [143, 166].

745 Conventional corneal grafts are typically ineffective for managing limbal stem cell
746 deficiency and the therapeutic aim is to boost the limbal epithelial stem cell
747 population through transplantation of donor tissue [167]. However, this method risks
748 damaging the limbal epithelial stem cell population in the donor eye if the fellow eye
749 of the recipient is used in unilateral cases of limbal stem cell deficiency, or graft
750 rejection and the need for immunosuppression if a non-self donor is used [168].

751

752 Human amniotic membranes are the substrate commonly used for culturing and
753 delivering limbal epithelial stem cells to the ocular surface [169]. However, this
754 process requires expensive donor screening and manipulating and securing the
755 substrate can prove difficult [168]. The use of contact lenses as a stem cell delivery
756 device has been demonstrated, with the contact lens vehicle doubling as a protective
757 bandage following grafting [170]. limbal epithelial stem cells have been shown to
758 reliably transfer from the contact lens to the ocular surface [171, 172] and an initial
759 study of three patients with limbal stem cell deficiency reported a 100% success rate
760 at a 12-month follow-up [173].

761

762 Contact lenses are beneficial in that they are synthetic and non-immunogenic,
763 eliminating the xenobiotic infection risk from donor tissue. However, the risk of
764 infection resulting from overnight contact lens wear should be considered and to

765 date, no clinical trials have compared the delivery of stem cells via contact lenses
766 and amniotic membrane, and this is warranted before large-scale implementation
767 can take place.

768

769 **4.3 Pupil or iris defects**

770 Liquid crystal cells have been recently combined with miniaturized electronic circuits
771 forming smart platforms in order to replicate the functionality of the pupil and iris
772 arrangement [174, 175]. This may be useful for iris defects (aniridia and coloboma),
773 transillumination of the iris (ocular albinism), high order aberrations (keratoconus)
774 and high sensitivity to light (dry eye syndrome and chronic migraine). Such devices
775 are intended to enhance the iris functionality by filtering incoming light autonomously
776 controlled by application specific integrated circuits and on-lens light sensors and
777 power directly by near magnetic fields and rechargeable micro-batteries [175].

778

779 The smart platforms are build-up by means of microsystems technology
780 (photolithography, sputtering, etc.), flip-chip of discrete components and
781 thermoforming into a spherical shape fitting the contact lens body [176]. The
782 platforms can be embedded inside soft contact lenses, thus avoiding contact with the
783 surface of the eye and maintaining the conventional refractive correction of the
784 ophthalmic device [177]. The device was also protected against saline solution (at
785 least for 25 weeks) and withstood mechanical bending forces [177]. Contrasts of 1:2
786 between ON/OFF (effectively blocking 50% of the light at least between wavelengths
787 of 500 nm and 600 nm) were able to be achieved, producing a pin-hole effect, and
788 simulated results of the light filter with a 2 mm pupil diameter embedded inside a
789 scleral contact lens with data from patients with aniridia gave maximum depth-of-
790 focus values of 3D, 2D and 0.75D for light levels of 1000 cd/m², 10 cd/m² and 1 cd/m²
791 [174]. Contrast values higher than 1:2 will be required in order to protect eyes with
792 big pupils from excessive light.

793

794 **4.4 Diabetic retinopathy**

795 Diabetic retinopathy is the leading cause of blindness in the working age population
796 and is a disease of ischemia leading to microvascular retinal damage. Oxygen
797 consumption of the rod photoreceptors is greatest during dark adaptation [178],

798 potentially causing hypoxia in the diabetic retina and driving further disease
799 progression [179]. To minimise hypoxia during sleep, researchers have considered
800 various methods of delivering light to the retina during eye closure [180] and the
801 development of a phosphorescent contact lens for treatment of diabetic retinopathy
802 has been described [181]. This novel silicone elastomer contact lens incorporates 24
803 radioluminescent gaseous tritium light sources arranged in a radial pattern, with a
804 clear central 3 mm aperture. This design allows unobstructed vision under photopic
805 conditions, whilst under scotopic conditions the enlarged pupil allows the retina to
806 receive the phototherapeutic dose.

807

808 The tritium light source is well suited to use in a contact lens, due to its compact size
809 (300 μm by 2000 μm), safety profile (it emits no ionising radiation) and long life (12-
810 year half-life). The therapeutic benefit of this concept is debatable, with
811 electroretinogram testing in an animal model highlighting suppressed rod dark
812 adaptation with this contact lens technology, whilst a large multi-centre randomised
813 clinical trial, evaluating a similar mask-based technology, found no therapeutic
814 benefit [182]. This contact lens approach, however, has several advantages over the
815 mask-based system, as the lens moves with the eye, avoiding issues associated
816 with Bell's phenomena, the light does not pass through the lid (thus the light intensity
817 reaching the retina is more consistent), the presence of light is less bothersome (due
818 to Troxler neural adaptation) and the wavelength better controlled [181]. Future
819 clinical trials are clearly required to investigate whether this contact lens-based
820 approach is able to reduce the long-term risk of diabetic retinopathy and diabetic
821 macular oedema.

822

823 **4.5 Colour vision deficiency**

824 Colour vision deficiency is the result of an abnormality or absence of one or more of
825 the three classes of cone photoreceptors in the normal human retina that are
826 responsible for the perception of colour. Having abnormal colour vision may impact
827 virtually all facets of modern life from childhood to adulthood, with implications
828 extending across sports, driving, education, occupation and health and safety issues.
829 For these reasons, exploring and understanding technologies that remove some of
830 these limitations are of keen interest.

831 Enhancement of colour perception in patients with colour vision deficiency has been
832 mostly limited to using colour filters, which enhance colour discrimination by tuning
833 the brightness, saturation and hue through selective absorption of certain
834 wavelengths. The first contact lens example to use this concept was the X-Chrom
835 lens, a red contact lens placed over one eye [183]. This long-pass filter works by
836 darkening yellow-green objects and making orange objects appear more red and
837 slightly darker and appears more effective for anomalous trichomats than dichromats
838 [184]. The X-Chrom concept was modified by Harris to develop the ChromaGen
839 lens, a soft lens system with seven hues and light, medium and dark densities [185].
840 Tint selection is based on patient subjective response and their use significantly
841 reduced error rates on Ishihara plates, the D-15 test, and an improvement in
842 subjective colour perception, though it did suffer from reports of poor vision in dim
843 light [186].

844

845 The most recent contact lens development concerns a metasurface-based approach
846 [187]. A large-scale plasmonic metasurface was embedded on a gas permeable
847 contact lens to address deuteranomaly, the most common class of colour vision
848 deficiency. These metasurfaces are engineered surfaces made of subwavelength
849 building blocks that enable a tuneable control over their optical response, in this
850 case, utilising the wavelength-selective features to overcome colour vision
851 deficiency. The fabrication process utilises an electron beam lithography technique
852 to fabricate a 40nm thick metasurface of gold building blocks on an indium-tin-oxide-
853 coated glass. They then spin-coat a thin (~350nm) layer of polymethylmethacrylate
854 (PMMA) and bake it to adhere the metasurface and use hot deionised water to
855 separate the PMMA matrix with the embedded metasurface from the glass substrate.
856 This membrane is then thermally fused to a plasma-treated gas permeable lens.
857 Using a variety of matrices, researchers were able to demonstrate a shift in the
858 perception of a test pigment in the case of deuteranomaly closer to the pigment
859 viewed in cases of normal vision and were able to demonstrate contrast restoration
860 using a simulated Ishihara plate perception test [187].

861

862 Clinical evaluation of commercial filters designed to enhance colour discrimination or
863 “correct” colour vision deficiency indicates either no enhancement or substantial
864 performance trade-offs. As a result, the potential benefits of the application of

865 spectral filtering to mitigate colour vision deficiency are uncertain. Moreover,
866 subjective anecdotes indicate that some colour vision deficiency subjects appreciate
867 certain spectral filters, but the mechanism is not well understood. The metasurface
868 contact lens technology holds some promise in that it may allow “tuneable” spectral
869 filtering functionality into contact lenses to achieve an improved success rate over a
870 range of patients with colour vision deficiency.

871

872 **5 Drug Delivery to the Ocular Surface**

873 Drug releasing soft contact lenses have been widely studied and continue to show
874 promise, primarily by overcoming the current limitations associated with delivering
875 ophthalmic medications via an eye drop.

876

877 The primary disadvantage with eye drops is their low bioavailability of less than 5%
878 [188], which is attributed to high tear turnover rates, blinking, nasolacrimal drainage,
879 non-productive absorption by the conjunctiva, and low permeability of the cornea
880 [189, 190]. Thus, improving bioavailability by increasing the residence time of the
881 drug on the ocular surface remains an important area of research. When placed on
882 the eye, a contact lens splits the tear film into the pre-lens tear film overlying the lens
883 and post-lens tear film (PoLTF) between the back surface of the lens and the ocular
884 surface. This compartmentalisation is beneficial to drug releasing contact lens as the
885 PoLTF is very thin with a relatively low turnover rate [191]. When a drug releasing
886 lens elutes its medication into the PoLTF the low tear turnover rate promotes an
887 increased concentration of the drug behind the lens, in addition to an increased
888 residence time, leading to potentially greater bioavailability of the drug and increased
889 ocular penetration [190, 192]. Additional benefits include decreased frequency of
890 drug administration, minimised systemic absorption and a more controlled drug
891 release profile [190].

892

893 Drug delivering contact lenses may offer more accurate dosing over eye drops [193],
894 provided the drug volume and release profile is consistent from lens to lens. Once
895 the lens is placed on the eye, the medication will elute from the lens with few
896 external factors influencing the release profile. Contrary to this, there are multiple
897 factors that can affect the variability of dosing via eye drops. With conventional eye

898 drop bottles, patients are required to tilt their head back and keep their eye open
899 while simultaneously positioning the inverted bottle directly over their eye and
900 squeezing the dropper bottle with the precise amount of force and with accurate aim
901 in an attempt to deliver the prescribed amount of medication. Not only is there
902 variability in how successful patients are in their aim but also in the drop size itself
903 based on the bottle tip, amount of drug in the bottle and angle at which the bottle is
904 held [194].

905

906 Incorporating drug-releasing technology into a soft contact lens may also significantly
907 improve treatment compliance over eye drops. The compliance rate with the routine
908 administration of eye drops is low [195] and while the reasons are likely
909 multifactorial, patients may simply have difficulty incorporating their eye drop therapy
910 into their daily routine. However, assuming a contact lens technology can provide a
911 sustained release over multiple days, a patient can wear the lens (or have it applied
912 for them) and have their medication continually delivered over a predetermined
913 period of time. If a drug releasing contact lens is loaded with a daily dose of
914 medication, the vision correction function of the contact lens may improve
915 compliance, particularly in habitual contact lens wearers, as inserting contact lenses
916 are already part of their daily routine.

917

918 Many topical ophthalmic drops require preservatives such as benzalkonium chloride
919 to provide antimicrobial protection and maintain drug stability. However, even at low
920 concentrations they can result in corneal and conjunctival epithelial cell toxicity [196,
921 197]. Contact lenses are terminally sterilised and so the use of preservatives with
922 drug-releasing contact lens technology is not required.

923

924 While there are potential benefits to delivering ophthalmic medications via a contact
925 lens, there are many challenges that must be overcome for this technology to
926 become a commercial reality.

927

928 **a) Choosing a lens/drug combination to optimise the uptake and release**
929 **profile**

930

931 The first consideration is in selecting the specific drug and contact lens material that
932 will allow for a therapeutically meaningful uptake and release profile. A key attribute
933 of the drug under consideration is its chemical nature. A more hydrophilic molecule
934 will be more easily incorporated in a more hydrophilic hydrogel lens material, while a
935 more lipophilic molecule will be more easily absorbed by a relatively hydrophobic
936 silicone hydrogel material. However, if a drug molecule has an exceptionally high
937 affinity for the lens material, then it could result in an unacceptably prolonged drug
938 release profile once the lens is placed on the eye [189]. The molecular weight of the
939 drug may also impact the ultimate uptake and release of the drug [198].

940

941 The efforts to identify various technologies to influence drug uptake and release from
942 a contact lens have led to some compelling results from *in vitro* experiments.
943 However, it is important to note that the correlations between *in vitro* models and *in*
944 *vivo* results are not always strong, due to the difficulty in simulating continuous tear
945 flow, eyelid blinking mechanics, and the morphology of the ocular surface. Thus, the
946 drug release kinetics demonstrated in the laboratory may not be replicated when the
947 drug releasing lens is placed on the eye [199].

948

949 **b) Drug viability during manufacturing**

950

951 On the path to commercialisation, once the specific drug and contact lens material
952 has been selected and an optimal method for incorporating the drug into the lens
953 matrix obtained, the combination must remain viable throughout the lens
954 manufacturing process. The drug can be incorporated into the lens monomer mix,
955 facilitating a relatively homogenous distribution throughout the manufactured lens.
956 However, this requires that the drug withstand the lens curing steps (typically via a
957 light or thermal curing process). Once cured, the lens then typically goes through a
958 series of monomer extraction and lens hydration steps using aqueous and/or solvent
959 solutions. Depending on the chemical nature and stability of the drug, these curing
960 and extraction steps could have a significant impact on the final loaded drug
961 concentration or may even accelerate drug degradation. To protect the drug from the
962 lens manufacturing environment, the drug could be added after the lens has been
963 fully polymerised and hydrated. In this scenario, the challenge is then to find the
964 optimal method of drug incorporation, resulting in the desired drug uptake and

965 release profile, in addition to incorporating a consistent amount of drug within the
966 lenses. Finally, since most contact lenses are terminally sterilised via an autoclaving
967 process, the selected drug would ultimately need to be able to withstand a period of
968 intense heat (over 120 degrees Celsius).

969

970 **c) Impact of lens design on drug uptake**

971

972 While the consistent release of the drug is a key benefit of a drug releasing contact
973 lens, a prerequisite of this is that a consistent amount of drug is taken up by the lens.
974 The challenge in this comes from the multiple lens designs and range of lens powers
975 that are required to provide this vision-correcting technology to a broad patient base.
976 The different lens powers require subtle differences in lens shape, resulting in a
977 change in lens volume. For example, a hyperopic lens has a greater centre thickness
978 than a myopic contact lens. Similarly, the designs for toric contact lenses often have
979 an increased thickness profile across specific regions (due to the stabilisation zones)
980 as compared to a spherical power lens. Thus, to maintain a consistent and
981 efficacious dose being released to the eye, the drug uptake must be tailored to each
982 lens power and lens design during the manufacturing process, which is complex and
983 likely to add cost and time to the production process.

984

985 **d) Impact on contact lens properties**

986

987 The incorporation of a drug into a contact lens cannot significantly alter the contact
988 lens properties and parameters or have a detrimental impact on comfort, vision and
989 handling. The tear film uptake profile is also an important consideration, as the
990 chemical nature of the drug could result in tear film lipids and proteins to have a
991 greater affinity to the lens. The lens also needs to maintain an acceptable base curve
992 radius and diameter to ensure an optimal fit, as well as sufficient oxygen permeability
993 based on the intended wear modality.

994

995 **e) Regulatory issues**

996

997 Another substantial hurdle relates to the clinical trials required to demonstrate the
998 safety and efficacy of the drug releasing lens. The scope and timing associated with

999 these trials can be influenced by multiple factors, including the disease state being
1000 evaluated, the endpoints required to demonstrate efficacy, the intended lens wear
1001 modality (such as daily wear or extended wear), the existing safety profile of the drug
1002 and contact lens material, as well as the regulatory pathway for product approval, as
1003 combination products require both pharmaceutical and device review [200].
1004

1005 The lens wear modality of a drug releasing contact lens is obviously an important
1006 factor as it will dictate the required release profile necessary to provide a therapeutic
1007 benefit. For chronic disease states or patients who may otherwise not wear contact
1008 lenses, an extended wear or monthly replacement daily wear modality may seem
1009 logical. In these cases, the drug release profile would be tailored to elute the
1010 medication over multiple days or weeks. However, if intended to be worn on an
1011 extended wear modality, the drug releasing lens would likely require extensive
1012 clinical testing to support an acceptable safety profile [200]. If the lens is designed for
1013 a frequent replacement, daily wear modality, then the drug-lens combination would
1014 need to be able to withstand the daily rubbing, rinsing, and overnight soaking steps
1015 associated with the use of multipurpose cleaning and disinfecting solutions. A daily
1016 disposable lens wear modality may provide some advantages by avoiding the
1017 interactions with lens care solutions, but to be commercially viable, the
1018 manufacturing process would need to be scaled up to allow for a sufficient quantity
1019 of lenses to be produced.
1020

1021 **f) Long-term stability**

1022

1023 A packaged drug-releasing contact lens is required to demonstrate long term stability
1024 with minimal drug degradation and with a consistent amount of drug in the lens over
1025 time [201]. This can be challenging, as soft contact lenses need to remain hydrated
1026 and are usually immersed in solution in their primary packaging container. Once
1027 manufacturing and packaging are complete, the lenses are then shipped and stored
1028 in distribution centres, ECP offices, or in patient's medicine cabinets for many
1029 months prior to use. During this time, the medicated lenses can be exposed to a
1030 wide range of temperatures, which can impact the stability of the product. Therefore
1031 the packaging solution and primary packaging must be compatible with the drug-lens
1032 combination to protect it from degradation over time [201].

1033

1034 **5.1 Ocular drug delivering technologies**

1035 A wide variety of technologies have been established in an attempt to develop
1036 commercially viable methods to deliver drugs to the ocular surface from contact
1037 lenses.

1038

1039 **5.1.1 Contemporary contact lens materials**

1040 Contemporary contact lens materials are commonly used as part of the therapeutic
1041 management of conditions such as corneal abrasions and recurrent corneal erosions
1042 via their so-called use as “bandage lenses” [202, 203], often in conjunction with
1043 concurrent use of topical pharmaceutical management agents such as antibiotics
1044 and steroids [204]. Despite this common clinical practice, few studies have
1045 investigated the impact of concurrent pharmaceutical and contact lens use on clinical
1046 outcomes or safety, or of the degree to which topical drugs are delivered to the eye
1047 when combined with commercially available contact lens materials.

1048

1049 Almost every major class of ophthalmic medications in use has been investigated *in*
1050 *vitro* for their uptake and release into commercially available contact lenses, from
1051 anti-allergy [205, 206], antibacterials [207-213], antifungals [214], anti-inflammatories
1052 [206, 211, 215], antimyopia [216], antiviral [217], anaesthetics [218-221], dry eye
1053 [211, 222, 223], non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents [206] and glaucoma agents
1054 [224-227]. The influence of the *in vitro* testing conditions has also been explored
1055 across different studies, with the influence of aspects as broad as the concentration
1056 of the drug loading solution [228], the rate of replenishment or replacement of the
1057 drug release solution [217, 222], the composition of the drug release solution (saline
1058 versus a synthetic artificial tear analogue) [225-227] and mechanical effects of
1059 simulated blinking [229].

1060

1061 While there are some exceptions, general trends emerge from these studies.
1062 Commercially available contact lens materials do demonstrate significant amounts of
1063 drug uptake and release [205, 207]. The properties of the material and drug
1064 (particularly with respect to hydrophobicity, hydrophilicity and ionic charge) have
1065 significant impact on drug uptake. For example, the amphipathic antifungal drug

1066 natamycin (which has both hydrophilic and hydrophobic components) is expected to
1067 interact with both the more hydrophilic conventional hydrogel polymers as well as the
1068 more hydrophobic silicone hydrogel polymers, and indeed the amount of drug uptake
1069 into the two materials is similar [214]. However, as the drug is relatively hydrophobic,
1070 it remains more tightly bound in the hydrophobic silicone hydrogel polymers, leading
1071 to proportionally less of the drug being released [214]. Surface charge effects are
1072 most prominently illustrated with the interaction between the negatively charged
1073 etafilcon A material with ciprofloxacin, which is positively charged in solution [207].
1074 This led to a significant charge interaction between the drug and lens, leading to a
1075 significant uptake of the drug into the material compared to other materials
1076 investigated [207]. In contrast, the hydrophobic anti-glaucoma drug latanoprost was
1077 taken up and released to the greatest degree by the more hydrophobic silicone
1078 hydrogel materials compared to conventional hydrogel materials, further illustrating
1079 the importance of the drug polymer interaction characteristics [225].

1080

1081 The general characteristics of drug release from drug soaked commercially available
1082 contact lenses *in vitro* are uncontrolled, burst release over the course of minutes or,
1083 in rare instances, hours [205-207, 214, 215, 225, 228]. There is little evidence for
1084 sustained release from unmodified, commercially available lenses *in vitro*. Thus, it is
1085 likely that approaches that are more sophisticated than simply soaking commercial
1086 lenses in drugs are required to develop viable drug-delivering contact lens materials.

1087

1088 **5.1.2 Nanoparticles**

1089 Due to their size, nanoparticles have been used as effective drug carriers for both
1090 the anterior and posterior segment of the eye [230, 231]. They can be made from a
1091 combination of natural and/or synthetic polymers, providing a wide array of
1092 properties that can also be further tuned for drug delivery applications, including
1093 enhanced drug loading, targeted delivery, increased residence time and sustained
1094 drug release [231].

1095

1096 Nanoparticles can be readily and usefully divided based on their size, properties or
1097 morphology [232]. Nanoparticles are broadly classified as molecules that range in
1098 sizes between 1 and 1000 nm [231, 233] and can include micelles, liposomes,
1099 metallic and polymeric nanoparticles [233-238].

1100

1101 The selection criteria for nanoparticles should include those which are biocompatible,
1102 safe and do not interfere with critical contact lens properties such as optical
1103 transmittance, water content or oxygen permeability [239-243]. The choice of
1104 nanoparticles is also dependent on the synthesis approach, with each process
1105 having its respective advantages and disadvantages [244]. For instance, synthesis of
1106 metal nanoparticles utilise different methods than those used for micelles or those
1107 used for polymeric nanoparticles [244]. Cost, safety, ease-of-use, repeatability and
1108 scalability are some of the critical factors researchers have to balance when applying
1109 this technology to contact lenses.

1110

1111 The combination of drug-nanoparticles with a contact lens produces a drug delivery
1112 platform that promises the benefits of both systems. Sustained drug release is often
1113 observed from a nanoparticle-laden contact lens [189, 245-247] because the
1114 encapsulated drugs have to diffuse through multiple barriers before reaching the tear
1115 film [248]. Table 3 provides some examples of nanoparticle technologies that have
1116 been developed and incorporated into contact lens materials.

1117

1118 Table 3: Examples of nanoparticle technologies for contact lens drug delivery

Drug	Nanoparticle	Synthesis method	Loading method	Average size (nm)	Release Duration
Ciprofloxacin [249]	Pullulan-PCL <i>micelles</i>	Dropwise addition of water to DMSO	Dispersion in pre- polymer solution and soaking	142 ± 12	3 – 4 days
Cyclosporine [250]	Brij surfactants <i>micelles</i>	Dissolution in water	Dispersion in pre- polymer solution	< 40	>15 days
Cyclosporine [243]	C-HA <i>micelles</i>	Dissolution in water and DMSO	Dispersion in pre- polymer solution	300	12 days

Ketotifen [242]	silica shell	Microemulsion	Dispersed in pre-polymer solution	104.2 – 126.54	10 days
Lidocaine [221]	DMPC <i>liposomes</i>	Microemulsion	Dispersed in pre-polymer solution	20	8 days
Loteprednol etabonate [251]	PCL/HEMA/PEG-DA	Surfactant-free mini-emulsion polymerisation	Dispersed in pre-polymer solution	52.3 - 83.4	12 days
Natamycin [252]	Dex- <i>b</i> -PLA <i>micelles</i>	Nanoprecipitation (DMSO to water)	Soaking	26.1 – 26.6	12 – 24 hours
Prednisolone [253]	PLGA	Emulsion-solvent evaporation	Dispersed in pre-polymer solution	294.5 ±1.8	24 hours
Timolol [254]	PVP-PNIPAAM	Electrohydrodynamic atomisation	Dissolved in polymeric solution	52% of nano-structures < 200	24 hours
Timolol [241]	EC	Double emulsion	Dispersed in pre-polymer solution	261 - 340	168 hours

1119

1120 **C-HA**, cholesterol-hyaluronic acid; **DA**, diacrylate; **EC**, ethyl cellulose; **Dex**, Dextran;
1121 **DMPC**, dimyristoylphosphatidylcholine; **DMSO**, dimethylsulfoxide; **HEMA**, poly (2-
1122 hydroxyethyl methacrylate); **PEG**, polyethylene glycol; **PCL**, polycaprolactone; **PLA**,
1123 polylactic acid; **PLGA**, poly (lactic-co-glycolic acid); **PNIPAAM**, poly (N-
1124 isopropylacrylamide); **PVP**, poly(vinylpyrrolidone).

1125

1126

1127 **5.1.2.1 Incorporation of nanoparticles into contact lens materials**

1128 In general, two key steps are required to fabricate a nanoparticle-laden contact lens
1129 material: synthesis of the drug-loaded nanoparticle, followed by its incorporation into
1130 a contact lens polymer [246].

1131

1132 Two major methods exist to incorporate nanoparticles into contact lens polymers:

1133

- 1134 a) The drug-nanoparticles are mixed with the pre-polymerisation solution of the
1135 future contact lens material, entrapping the drug-nanoparticles within the
1136 polymer during the polymerisation process [189, 245-247]. The advantage of
1137 this approach is that the amount of drug loading can easily be controlled by
1138 varying the concentration of the drug-nanoparticle component. The drawback
1139 is that the process may result in unwanted side reactions, potentially affecting
1140 contact lens properties including optical transmittance, oxygen permeability
1141 and water content. It may also affect the integrity of the drug if it is sensitive to
1142 the polymerisation process.
- 1143 b) Soaking an already formed contact lens with the drug-nanoparticles [238, 239,
1144 249, 252, 255-257]. The advantage in this approach is that it can readily be
1145 applied to commercial contact lenses, which potentially greatly lowers the
1146 barrier for commercialisation. Additionally, this method is also compatible with
1147 drugs that may be sensitive to heat or ultraviolet radiation, which are both
1148 commonly used as part of the polymerisation process for hydrogel materials
1149 [252, 255]. The downside to this method is that there is less control over the
1150 amount of drug loading. The drug release duration may also be significantly
1151 shorter compared to drug-nanoparticles incorporated during the
1152 polymerisation step as the nanoparticles are located only on the lens surface.

1153

1154 **5.1.2.2 Liposomes**

1155 Liposomes represent a unique class of vesicles made from a phospholipid bilayer.
1156 They can greatly vary in size, but liposomes less than 1000 nm are generally
1157 considered to be a type of nanoparticle. Liposomes consist of an aqueous core that
1158 can be used to incorporate water-soluble drugs and a lipid phase that can be
1159 exploited to dissolve hydrophobic drugs [221, 235]. A popular approach is to coat the
1160 exterior of the contact lens in liposomes. Dimyristoylphosphatidylcholine and
1161 cholesterol liposomes have been coated onto HEMA-based hydrogels by depositing
1162 a layer-by-layer polyion solution to electrostatically sandwich the liposomes in place
1163 [258]. The liposomes did not contain drugs themselves. Prior to deposition, the
1164 hydrogels had been soaked in levofloxacin. Both the polyelectrolyte layers and the
1165 liposomes acted as a barrier to release, decreasing the total amount of release
1166 without affecting the release rate [258]. Utilization of the high affinity avidin-biotin

1167 binding has also been used to attach biotinylated polyethylene glycol containing
1168 liposomes to NeutrAvidin-coated contact lenses [259].

1169

1170 Attaching drug eluting liposomes to the contact lens has also been explored.
1171 PEGylated 1,2-Diasteroyl-sn-glycero-3-phosphocholine (DPSC) was attached to
1172 HEMA-based hydrogels. Multiple layers of liposomes containing a model drug
1173 (carboxyfluorescein) could be attached to the surface of the hydrogel. By AFM
1174 imaging, the liposomes could be visualised on the surface of the lens. The lenses
1175 could be stored for one month, without release of the liposomes from the lens [259].

1176

1177 Due to their similarities with cellular membranes, they are generally non-toxic, highly
1178 biocompatible and biodegradable [235]. To date, no *in vivo* or human studies using
1179 liposomes in contact lens drug delivery have been reported.

1180

1181 **5.1.2.3 Polymeric nanoparticles**

1182 There is a large selection when it comes to polymeric nanoparticles, each with their
1183 own unique properties and advantages. The encapsulation of drugs in polymeric
1184 nanoparticles creates a diffusion barrier, which results in sustained drug release.

1185

1186 Hydrophobic polymers are often used to encapsulate hydrophobic drugs.

1187 Formulations of PLGA nanoparticles to deliver prednisolone, a corticosteroid, have
1188 been described [253]. In some cases, it may be beneficial to create nanoparticles
1189 with multiple different polymeric layers. Polycaprolactone in association with PEG to
1190 create nanoparticles to deliver loteprednol etabonate has been described [251].

1191 Polymers used in contact lens materials, such as polyvinyl alcohol, can also be used
1192 to formulate nanoparticles. A novel ketone drug for treating microbial keratitis,
1193 phomopsidone, was encapsulated in polyvinyl alcohol nanoparticles. [255].

1194

1195 **5.1.2.4 Metal nanoparticles**

1196 Metallic nanoparticles have been widely employed in nanotechnology because of
1197 their unique electrical, optical, magnetic and chemical properties [260]. For instance,
1198 silver and gold are well known for their antimicrobial and optical properties [260].

1199 Furthermore, there are numerous approaches to functionalise metallic nanoparticles
1200 such that they can easily bind drugs, ligands and antibodies [260]. Metallic

1201 nanoparticles, especially silver and copper, can be used as antimicrobial coatings on
1202 contact lenses [239].

1203

1204 Despite their numerous pharmaceutical advantages, nanoparticles can be toxic to
1205 humans and the environment [261]. Nanoparticles have a very high surface area,
1206 which provides more contact points to interact with cellular components [261]. In
1207 some cases, this design is advantageous when the interaction is intended, but in
1208 other cases it could lead to increased cellular toxicity. There are also other reasons
1209 contributing to the toxicity of nanoparticles, including their shape and their
1210 biochemical composition [261]. For these reasons, one of the main barriers to the
1211 commercialisation of nanoparticles and nanoparticle-laden contact lenses will be
1212 proving their safety and biocompatibility.

1213

1214 **5.1.3 Microemulsions**

1215 Microemulsions are stable, isotropic and homogenous solutions of a polar
1216 substance, a non-polar compound, and a surfactant [262]. Microemulsions can be
1217 described as mixtures of oil in water, water in oil, or as bicontinuous phases.

1218

1219 Their ability to dissolve both hydrophobic and hydrophilic components
1220 simultaneously is tremendously advantageous in drug delivery. In particular, the
1221 interface between the oil and water allows for encapsulation chemistries to entrap
1222 drugs and other compounds [262]. Thus, microemulsions have been widely used as
1223 a method to synthesise a variety of nanoparticles [262] and other nanostructures
1224 [263]. Microemulsions are distinctively different from emulsions and nano-emulsions,
1225 which are unstable [264]. Since they require a high concentration of surfactants and
1226 co-surfactants for stabilisation, which may be toxic to the ocular surface [265, 266],
1227 careful considerations should be made in selecting biocompatible surfactants. Table
1228 4 provides some examples of microemulsion-laden contact lenses that have been
1229 developed to date.

1230

1231

1232 Table 4: Examples of the development of microemulsions for contact lens drug
 1233 delivery

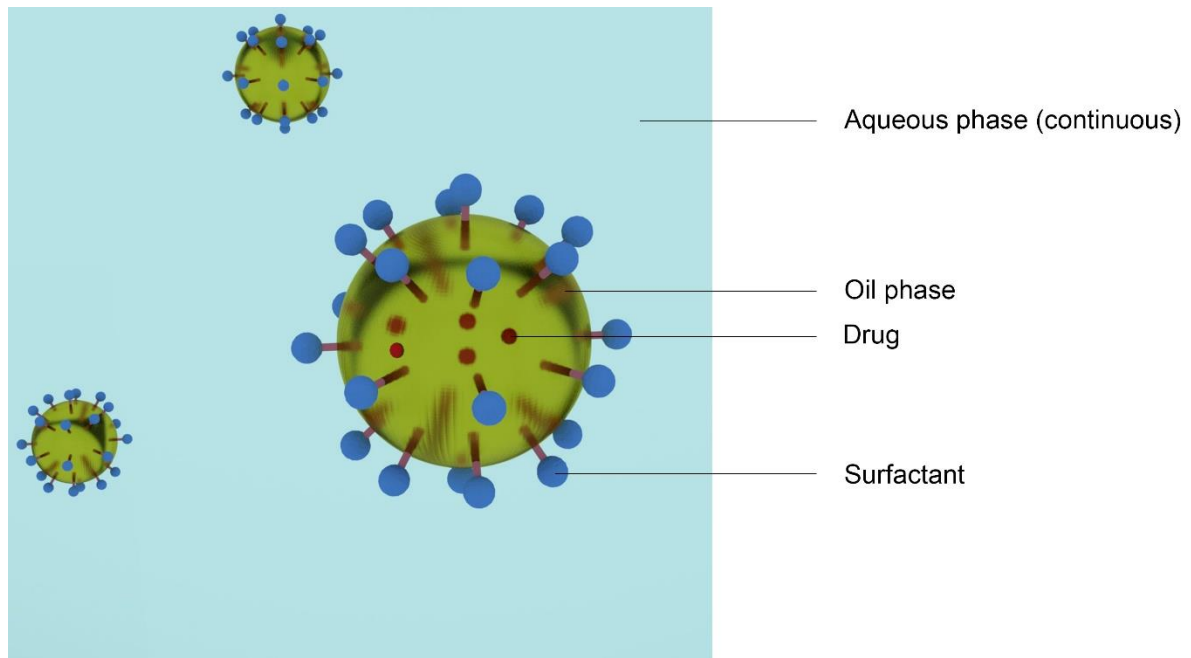
Drug	Oil	Surfactants	Loading method	Average size (nm)	Duration
Cyclosporine A [267]	Isopropyl myristate	Pluronic F68, Pluronic F127, Tween 20, Tween 80, Sodium caprylate	Dispersed in pre-polymer solution	53 - 168	15 days
Ketotifen [242]	Isopropyl myristate	Tween 70, Pluronic F127, OTMS	Dispersed in pre-polymer solution	104.2 – 126.54	10 days
Timolol [268]	CL polymer	PEO-R-MA-40, silicone surfactant	Dispersed in pre-polymer solution	10-250	72 hours
Timolol [269]	Ethyl butyrate	Pluronic F127	Dispersed in pre-polymer solution	20 - 35	< 4 hours

1234 **OTMS**, Octadecyltrimethoxysilane; **PEO-R-MA-40**, ω -methoxy poly(ethylene oxide)
 1235 40 undecyl α -methacrylate macromonomer

1236

1237 Most of the microemulsions used with contact lenses are oil in water microemulsions
 1238 [267, 269-274]. These systems contain nanosized oil globules in the nanometre
 1239 scales that are stabilised by surfactants, as shown in Figure 2 [262, 264]. The drugs,
 1240 often hydrophobic, are entrapped within the oil phase, which then can slowly diffuse
 1241 into the continuous water phase.

1242



1243

1244

1245 Figure 2: Schematic of an oil in water microemulsion with a dissolved hydrophobic
 1246 drug

1247

1248 In an oil in water microemulsion, the surfactants act as a barrier to drug diffusion
 1249 from the oil phase. The diffusion rate can, therefore, be tuned by changing the
 1250 concentration [274] or properties of the surfactants, such as chain length [267] and
 1251 ionicity [271]. Increasing the surfactant concentration, chain length and adding
 1252 ionicity have been shown to create better diffusion barriers to slow release of the
 1253 drug from the microemulsion [267, 271, 274].

1254

1255 The incorporation of microemulsions in a contact lens may affect critical properties
 1256 such as wettability, and more importantly, optical transparency. Studies have noted
 1257 that the stability of the microemulsions has an effect on overall transmittance [267,
 1258 269, 271]. Additionally, the size of the globules in the microemulsion can also have
 1259 an effect, with smaller sizes having a better optical transmission than larger sizes
 1260 [267, 271].

1261

1262 Microemulsion contact lenses present a promising strategy to improve drug delivery
 1263 by increasing drug loading and prolonging the release duration. The release of
 1264 surfactants from microemulsion contact lenses, however, should be evaluated

1265 carefully, as a high concentration of surfactants may lead to ocular toxicity [265,
1266 266]. Future studies should, therefore, also evaluate both the short and long-term
1267 safety of these devices.

1268

1269 **5.1.4 Vitamin E**

1270 In an effort to reduce the initial drug burst and to prolong the duration of release,
1271 contact lenses have been soaked in a media containing Vitamin E along with the
1272 drug. Vitamin E is a biocompatible aliphatic compound and it is hypothesised that
1273 Vitamin E forms nanobarriers within the contact lens matrix, and that these
1274 nanobarriers impede drug release by slowing drug diffusion out of the lens [275].
1275 Based on this approach, narafilcon and senofilcon contact lenses were soaked in a
1276 0.07 g/mL Vitamin E-ethanol solution for 24 hours, then dried and immersed in a
1277 0.3% solution of ofloxacin in PBS for 7 days. Lenses exposed to Vitamin E released
1278 ofloxacin longer *in vitro* than lenses lacking Vitamin E [276]. A similar approach was
1279 used to modify *in vitro* release of dexamethasone [277], timolol [278], bimatoprost
1280 [275], levofloxacin [279], ciprofloxacin [280], anaesthetics (lidocaine, bupivacaine
1281 and tetracaine) [219] and brimonidine [281].

1282

1283 Vitamin-E loaded contact lenses have been studied in several *in vivo* models.
1284 Pirfenidone and Vitamin E loaded contact lenses were evaluated in a rabbit model of
1285 alkali burn [282]. Rabbits wearing the contact lenses showed greater improvement in
1286 corneal haze and more down regulation in inflammatory markers compared to
1287 untreated eyes. Eyes treated with the pirfenidone-Vitamin E contact lenses had
1288 greater drug penetration into the aqueous humour than eyes treated with pirfenidone
1289 eye drops; this finding suggested that the contact lenses conferred greater
1290 bioavailability than the drop regimen [282]. Vitamin E was also studied as a means of
1291 prolonging the release of timolol from contact lenses for the treatment of glaucoma in
1292 a dog model [278]. The amount of timolol release from lenses was inversely related
1293 to the Vitamin E concentration. The results showed that IOP reduction from baseline
1294 by the contact lens on a daily basis was comparable with that by eye drops but with
1295 only 20% of drug dose, which suggested higher drug bioavailability for the Vitamin E-
1296 treated contact lenses than drops alone [278].

1297

1298 **5.1.5 Molecular imprinting**

1299 Molecular imprinting is a polymerisation technique that creates shape specific and/or
1300 functional group specific areas or “memory” within a polymer on a molecular scale
1301 [283]. This typically involves the incorporation of template molecules and functional
1302 monomers as part of the pre-polymerisation mixture. The template molecules in the
1303 mixture represent the molecules of interest. While this often can be the actual
1304 molecule of interest, such as a drug to be released, in some instances this may
1305 represent only a part of a larger molecule [283]. The functional monomers in the
1306 mixture are typically small molecules that can be incorporated into the polymer and
1307 are chosen based on their ability to interact with the molecules of interest non-
1308 covalently, through forces such as hydrogen bonds or ionic forces. By including both
1309 the template and the functional monomers in the pre-polymerisation mixture, the
1310 functional monomers self-assemble around the templates, creating shape and
1311 functional specific “cavities” in the final polymer. Removal of the template afterward
1312 yields a polymer with high selectivity and affinity for the template and closely related
1313 molecules.

1314

1315 From a drug delivery perspective, the high affinity for the template molecule created
1316 during the molecular imprinting process is attractive as a means to increase the drug
1317 delivery period from a material [283]. Initial studies centred on the anti-glaucoma
1318 drug timolol imprinted in hydrogel systems, with a particular emphasis on drug
1319 loading and subsequent release under various *in vitro* parameters [284, 285]. *In vivo*
1320 testing of an optimised timolol molecularly imprinted DEAA-MAA-EGDMA material in
1321 a rabbit model demonstrated a substantially higher peak tear timolol concentration
1322 and area under the curve over time compared to non-imprinted materials or timolol
1323 eye drops [286].

1324

1325 Subsequent investigations into molecular imprinted contact lens drug delivery
1326 systems furthered the understanding of critical parameters, backbone monomers,
1327 functional monomers and crosslinker concentrations needed for systems designed
1328 for different ocular pharmaceuticals. Published examples included a wide variety of
1329 drugs, including anti-allergy [287, 288], antibacterial [289-292], anti-inflammatory
1330 [293-295], anti-glaucoma [296, 297] and dry eye [298, 299], all of which

1331 demonstrated some substantial increase in drug loading and release times *in vitro*
1332 compared to non-imprinted materials.

1333

1334 Several studies have monitored tear drug concentrations with molecular imprinting
1335 use in animal models and compared them to levels found with eye drops or drug
1336 soaked non-imprinted materials [297, 300, 301]. A biomimetic inspired molecular
1337 imprinted contact lens for the release of ketotifen demonstrated upwards of 72 hours
1338 of release when tested *in vitro and* a mean residence time of approximately 12 hours
1339 in the tear film of New Zealand white rabbits, with a peak in concentration seen
1340 within four hours [301]. In contrast, non-imprinted lenses peaked at a lower
1341 concentration within four hours and had a calculated mean residence time of only
1342 approximately 3 hours [301]. Similar studies have been conducted with model
1343 silicone hydrogel materials for the anti-glaucoma drug bimatoprost, where the
1344 molecularly imprinted material demonstrated drug concentrations within the rabbit
1345 tear film for upwards of 12 hours [297].

1346

1347 One study has demonstrated the impact of molecular imprinted materials against *in*
1348 *vivo Pseudomonas aeruginosa* keratitis [291]. Ciprofloxacin releasing molecular
1349 imprinted silicone hydrogel materials with different acrylic acid functional monomer to
1350 ciprofloxacin template ratios were compared head to head with antibiotic eye drops
1351 and control lenses in a rabbit model of bacterial keratitis. Optimised imprinted
1352 materials with a 4:1 acrylic acid to ciprofloxacin ratio were able to significantly
1353 decrease the number of bacteria recovered from excised rabbit corneas after 24
1354 hours of lens wear compared to non-imprinted lenses and the untreated controls.
1355 While the corneas were not sterilised as was seen with eyes treated with hourly
1356 ciprofloxacin eye drops, the treatment effect with the imprinted lenses was achieved
1357 by loading lenses with antibiotic concentrations 100 times lower than the
1358 conventional eye drop therapy, suggesting significant bioavailability when delivered
1359 via this method [291].

1360

1361 **5.1.6 Ion interactions**

1362 Several ophthalmic drugs are ionically charged (or can be formulated as such),
1363 which can be exploited to form electrostatic interactions with a charged contact lens
1364 material. These ionic interactions, between a contact lens and a drug, have been

1365 shown to improve drug loading significantly and achieve sustained release [205, 207,
1366 302-306].

1367

1368 Several commercially available contact lens materials are ionically charged
1369 (balafilcon A; ocufilcon B; etafilcon A). Several studies have shown that such
1370 materials can improve the absorption and release of complementary charged drugs.
1371 For instance, etafilcon A and balafilcon A have been shown to have one of the
1372 highest uptake of ciprofloxacin-hydrochloride at low pH [207], at which the drug is
1373 positively charged [307]. Balafilcon A and etafilcon A had the highest uptake and
1374 release of ketotifen fumarate, a cationic drug, among various contact lens materials
1375 tested [205]. Unsurprisingly, these same contact lens types did not exhibit any
1376 electrostatic interactions for dexamethasone phosphate [215], a negatively charged
1377 molecule at physiological pH [302].

1378

1379 In addition to studies examining commercial materials, several studies have
1380 formulated ionic materials and investigated their ability to uptake and release
1381 ophthalmic drugs. The majority of studies have evaluated the performance of MAA,
1382 an anionic monomer that is used to increase the water content of common contact
1383 lens materials [308] and acrylic acid [290, 292, 296]. The negative charge on the
1384 carboxyl groups of acrylic acid and MAA imparts an overall anionic charge on the
1385 polymer at physiological pH [303, 309]. A study synthesised contact lens materials
1386 with acrylic acid and MAA to improve the loading of two ophthalmic drugs, ofloxacin
1387 and neomycin, in contact lenses [268]. At physiological pH, ofloxacin is neutrally
1388 charged while neomycin has a positive net charge. In order to ionise ofloxacin into its
1389 cationic form, the drugs were loaded into the contact lenses at pH 6.5. The
1390 electrostatic interactions between the contact lens polymer and drug significantly
1391 improved loading efficiency by 18 and 53 times for ofloxacin and neomycin
1392 respectively [303].

1393

1394 **5.1.7 Cyclodextrins**

1395 Cyclodextrins are naturally occurring cyclic oligosaccharides used in a variety of
1396 pharmaceutical applications [310]. cyclodextrins form supramolecular complexes
1397 with small molecule drugs allowing for slower release. In addition, they can entrap
1398 poorly water soluble molecules, allowing for higher loading within a drug release

1399 matrix. cyclodextrins are classified based on the number of structural units, the most
1400 common being α -cyclodextrins (6 units), β -cyclodextrins (7 units), or γ -cyclodextrins
1401 (8 units).

1402

1403 cyclodextrins have been incorporated into HEMA-based hydrogel discs and soaked
1404 in solutions of puerarin, an isoflavone found in a number of plants and herbs that is
1405 used to lower IOP. *In vitro* release studies showed that β -cyclodextrin-complexed
1406 hydrogels demonstrated slower release of puerarin than hydrogels lacking β -
1407 cyclodextrin-complexes. The amount of cyclodextrin loading corresponded to the
1408 duration of drug release [310]. In rabbits wearing the puerarin-cyclodextrin contact
1409 lenses, drug concentrations in tear fluid were greater than those from 1% puerarin
1410 eye drops. Concentrations of puerarin were detectable for up to six hours after
1411 administration compared to 3.5 hours from eye drops. The rabbits tolerated the
1412 contact lenses well. No adverse effects were reported [310].

1413

1414 In a separate study, HEMA and silicone hydrogels were functionalised with β -
1415 cyclodextrin and 2-hydroxypropyl- β -cyclodextrin (HP- β -cyclodextrin) and then
1416 soaked in natamycin, which is an antifungal drug. The *in vitro* release from HEMA-
1417 based hydrogel discs demonstrated no change in release duration, but an increase
1418 in loading compared to unmodified lenses. Compared to the addition of β -
1419 cyclodextrin, lenses functionalised with MHP- β -cyclodextrin exhibited an extended
1420 drug release for both HEMA and model silicon hydrogels within *in vitro* release
1421 testing studies [311].

1422

1423 **5.1.8 Drug-polymer films**

1424 The inclusion of a thin film composed of drug and polymer has been shown to be
1425 effective for sustained contact lens drug delivery [312]. The film is encapsulated
1426 within the periphery of a standard contact lens hydrogel. The polymer provides an
1427 additional barrier to diffusion, allowing for slow release of the drug. By limiting the
1428 drug-polymer film to the periphery of the contact lens, the contact lens can be loaded
1429 with a therapeutic amount of drug while keeping the centre of the lens optically clear
1430 [313]. The drug release rate can be tuned by adjusting polymer concentration, drug
1431 concentration, drug-polymer ratio and characteristics of the polymer (molecular
1432 weight) [312]. Drug delivering HEMA-based contact lenses incorporating these drug

1433 polymer films release therapeutic levels of ciprofloxacin [312], latanoprost [313, 314]
1434 and dexamethasone [315]. Unique formulations were used for each drug and each
1435 one demonstrated *in vitro* release for one week or more.

1436

1437 Contact lenses with PLGA films have demonstrated release in rabbits for up to one
1438 month for latanoprost [313] and one week for dexamethasone [315], with aqueous
1439 humour concentrations exceeding those of eye drops (0.005% latanoprost and 0.1%
1440 dexamethasone, respectively). Rabbits wore the contact lens for up to four weeks
1441 with no adverse effects. Efficacy of the dexamethasone-PLGA contact lens was
1442 demonstrated in a model of retinal vascular leakage [315]. Latanoprost-PLGA
1443 contact lenses lowered IOP in glaucomatous cynomolgus monkeys [314].

1444

1445 Lenses implanted with hyaluronic acid-HEMA-Moxifloxacin rings were worn by
1446 rabbits. Release measured from tear fluid endured over 48 hours, greater than the
1447 time from a 0.5% moxifloxacin eye drop. Efficacy studies in rabbit eyes infected with
1448 *S. aureus* demonstrated clinical signs improved by day four after the beginning of
1449 treatment compared to untreated eyes. The results were similar to those from rabbits
1450 receiving 0.5% moxifloxacin drops every four hours [316]. Similar lenses with timolol
1451 nanoparticles showed drug release in the tear film over one week [241]. For the
1452 treatment of dry eye, lenses were designed to contain and release hyaluronic acid,
1453 which has lubricating qualities [317]. The hyaluronic acid implanted rings
1454 demonstrated 15 days of release in tear fluid in rabbits. In a wound-healing model,
1455 rabbits wearing hyaluronic acid-implanted contact lenses had faster healing times
1456 than compared to untreated rabbits [317].

1457

1458 **5.2 Drug delivery for the management of specific diseases**

1459

1460 **5.2.1 Dry eye**

1461 Dry eye disease is very common, and several technologies related to either inserts
1462 or contact lens-based technologies exist.

1463

1464 **5.2.1.1 Hydroxypropyl cellulose dissolvable insert**

1465 Lacrisert (Aton Pharma, Lawrenceville, New Jersey), a hydroxypropyl cellulose
1466 insert, is available commercially to aid with moderate to severe dry eye patients
1467 where conventional treatment with artificial tears is inadequate [318]. Each insert
1468 contains 5 mg of hydroxypropyl cellulose, which is slowly released into the tear film
1469 as the insert degrades after being placed in the inferior cul-de-sac and is replaced
1470 daily [318]. Findings from a registry of 520 patients who utilised the insert for four
1471 weeks showed good tolerability, with only 13% of participants discontinuing use, with
1472 the majority doing so due to blurred vision [319]. The inserts were able to reduce
1473 patient symptoms, as measured by the Ocular Surface Disease Index [318, 320] as
1474 well as signs of dry eye, including improving tear film breakup time, fluorescein
1475 staining and Schirmer values [318-321]. Approximately half of participants reported
1476 some difficulty with using the insert, although this tended to improve over time [318].
1477

1478 **5.2.1.2 Lubricant releasing contact lens materials**

1479 Molecularly imprinted contact lens materials to enhance the loading and release of
1480 hyaluronic acid from contact lens materials have been developed [298]. These
1481 hydrogels exhibited improved loading of hyaluronic acid as well as an extended
1482 release profile, with 6 µg per hour being released for 24 hours when measured *in*
1483 *vitro* [298]. Another study investigated optimizing the use of an hyaluronic acid ring
1484 implanted into contact lenses of various thicknesses and crosslinker concentrations
1485 [317]. *In vivo* studies using New Zealand white rabbits showed hyaluronic acid
1486 release for 15 days into the tear film [317]. Molecular imprinting has also been used
1487 to manipulate the uptake and release of hydroxypropyl methylcellulose (HPMC), a
1488 rewetting agent utilised in many over the counter artificial tears [299]. Tailoring of the
1489 release rate of HPMC could be achieved under *in vitro* physiological flow rates, with
1490 release complete in 10, 13, 23 or 53 days achieved simply by varying the ratio of the
1491 functional monomer to template ratio [299]. Phospholipid replacement for dry eye
1492 therapy has also been proposed in the literature to address shortage of the lipid layer
1493 of the tear film in DED [322].
1494

1495 **5.2.1.3 Cyclosporine releasing contact lens materials**

1496 Cyclosporine is a T-cell calcineurin inhibitor leading to decreased T-cell activity and
1497 topical ophthalmic formulations have been approved to improve Schirmer scores in

1498 patients with moderate to severe DED [323]. Cyclosporine is a highly hydrophobic
1499 molecule and thus suffers poor solubility in aqueous solutions, requiring commercial
1500 eye drop formulations to be formed as emulsions [324]. Commercially available
1501 contact lenses show differences in cyclosporine release after loading depending on
1502 their base material. Etafilcon A lenses maintain release for only a day *in vitro*, while
1503 commercially available silicone hydrogels (which are comparatively more
1504 hydrophobic and better able to interact with cyclosporine) were able to release the
1505 drug without any further modification for upwards of two weeks [324]. Release from
1506 silicone hydrogel materials can be further enhanced through deposition of a coating
1507 of Vitamin E, with treated senofilcon A based silicone hydrogel lenses showing
1508 release of cyclosporine for more than one month *in vitro* [324].

1509

1510 Other means to load cyclosporine on to contact lenses involve the use of micelles
1511 [243], microemulsions and surfactants [274] or supercritical fluid techniques [325].
1512 The surfactant Brij 97 (polyoxyethylene (10) oleyl ether) has also been explored to
1513 form microemulsions of cyclosporine to aid in cyclosporine loading within HEMA gels
1514 [274].

1515

1516 **5.2.1.4 Anti-inflammatory releasing contact lens materials**

1517 Corticosteroids can be used to reduce inflammation associated with DED [326].
1518 Dexamethasone sodium phosphate has been investigated for its uptake and release
1519 from commercially available contact lens materials, with uncontrolled release being
1520 observed from all materials *in vitro* [215]. Silicone hydrogel lenses can be modified to
1521 improve their release characteristics through varying the amounts of incorporated
1522 Vitamin E, which serves as a diffusion barrier [277, 327]. The rate of release could
1523 be tailored significantly, with total release times of up to 8 hours achievable with
1524 balafilcon A with large amounts of Vitamin E deposited and upwards of 3 weeks of
1525 release from senofilcon A lenses with 23% Vitamin E loading [327].

1526

1527 **5.2.2 Glaucoma**

1528 Glaucoma is one of the leading causes of irreversible blindness and affects millions
1529 of people worldwide. The mainstay of therapy is topical drops that are self-
1530 administered 1 to 3 times a day to reduce IOP. Because adherence with glaucoma
1531 drop regimens is notoriously poor, a method of sustained drug delivery to treat

1532 glaucoma has been described as one of the major unmet needs in ophthalmology.
1533 [314] Several fornix-based inserts and contact lens-based treatments have been
1534 described as a means of delivering glaucoma medications.

1535

1536 **5.2.2.1 Inserts**

1537 From a drug-delivery perspective, the fornix-based approach enables inserts to have
1538 a larger size compared to devices that are placed on the cornea, in the punctum or
1539 inside the eye. The larger size can be used to store more drug or to contain
1540 mechanisms of controlling drug release.

1541

1542 Pilocarpine-releasing inserts were initially described in the 1970s. Ocuser delivered
1543 pilocarpine from an inferior fornix-based insert which diffused slowly through a
1544 semipermeable polymer membrane unit, releasing 20-40 µg of pilocarpine per hour
1545 for 7 days [328]. The clinical acceptance of the device was limited by discomfort,
1546 high rates of dislodgement and pilocarpine-related side effects [329]. No other
1547 topically placed ocular inserts or drug-eluting contact lenses have obtained FDA-
1548 approval or have become commercially available for the treatment of glaucoma.

1549

1550 A fornix-based insert composed of a HEMA matrix that contained timolol-loaded
1551 nanoparticles has been described in the literature [238]. *In vitro* studies
1552 demonstrated sustained timolol release for up to 3 months. A circular fornix-based
1553 insert that contains bimatoprost, a prostaglandin analog, has also been tested
1554 clinically [329]. The topical bimatoprost insert is a ring that is supported between
1555 both the inferior and superior fornix with varying sizes from (24 to 29 mm in
1556 diameter) to allow for customised fitting. The device was studied in a multicentre,
1557 double masked, randomised controlled clinical trial in 130 adult patients with
1558 glaucoma or ocular hypertension. Over 6 months, the retention rate was 88.5%.

1559

1560 **5.2.2.2 Contact lens-based delivery**

1561 Modifications have been made to contact lenses or the contact lens manufacturing
1562 process in an effort to increase drug loading and the duration of drug release for the
1563 treatment of glaucoma.

1564

- 1565 • By incorporating timolol into the monomers during the manufacturing process,
1566 HEMA-MAA contact lenses were shown to absorb and release more timolol
1567 compared to lenses that were not made using the molecular imprinting
1568 process. In rabbits, these imprinted contact lenses released more drug into
1569 the tear film over the course of 90 minutes than non-imprinted contact lenses
1570 [286].
- 1571 • Microemulsions have been added to contact lenses to increase drug loading
1572 and release rates [269]. Based on this approach, timolol loading was shown to
1573 be increased compared to lenses without microemulsions. However, in all
1574 cases, the release rate was faster for microemulsion-laden hydrogels. The
1575 authors proposed that the small size of the drug may have influenced its rapid
1576 release characteristics and that it was not impeded by the microemulsion
1577 system [269].
- 1578 • Vitamin E has been studied as a means of controlling glaucoma drug release.
1579 Contact lenses were soaked in a solution containing Vitamin E and timolol
1580 [330]. The addition of Vitamin E increased the duration of drug release, but,
1581 conversely, decreased the drug loading.
- 1582 • Drug polymer films have been encapsulated within the periphery of contact
1583 lenses to increase drug loading and to help modulate the drug release rates
1584 [312]. *In vitro*, contact lenses containing a latanoprost-PLGA film were shown
1585 to exhibit 1 month of drug elution. In rabbits that wore the lenses continuously
1586 for one month, the drug concentration in the aqueous humour was found to be
1587 greatest during a burst in the first day of lens wear. For the rest of the month,
1588 latanoprost concentration in the aqueous humour remained stable, with daily
1589 levels that exceeded that of daily latanoprost 0.005% drops [313].
- 1590
- 1591 Beyond improving compliance, there is some evidence that prescribing drug-eluting
1592 contact lenses could lead to better IOP reduction than glaucoma eyedrops [314].
1593 However, little is currently known about the efficacy, safety, or patient acceptability of
1594 using drug-eluting contact lenses in a clinical setting.
- 1595
- 1596 Acceptance of drug delivery contact lenses for the management of glaucoma
1597 appears to be high among treating clinicians. US-based ophthalmologists who treat

1598 glaucoma were specifically surveyed about using drug-eluting contact lenses as a
1599 management option. Ninety per cent answered that they would use the approach if it
1600 was available to treat their patients and 95% said they would use the devices to help
1601 differentiate lack of treatment efficacy from lack of patient adherence with drops
1602 [331].

1603

1604 **5.2.3 Bacterial and fungal keratitis**

1605 Antibiotic solutions and ointments are commonly used to treat keratitis, conjunctivitis
1606 and to prevent infections following ocular surgeries or injuries, such as corneal
1607 abrasions and thus many researchers have explored antibiotic delivery through
1608 contact lens-based devices [332].

1609

1610 Antibiotic solutions are formulated at relatively high concentrations and are
1611 administered multiple times a day. For instance, moxifloxacin, is commercially
1612 formulated as a 0.5% (5 mg/ ml) solution. However, even at this concentration,
1613 moxifloxacin is often not sufficiently concentrated to treat many corneal ulcers,
1614 requiring the use of compounded antibiotics such as vancomycin at a concentration
1615 of 25 mg/ml. With regard to contact lens antibiotic drug delivery, the potency of a
1616 drug is important because contact lenses are relatively small devices, the drugs are
1617 frequently opaque and loading a clinically meaningful amount of drug into the lens
1618 has presented a historical challenge [207].

1619

1620 Contact lenses may be able to overcome the challenge presented by the relatively
1621 low potency of antibiotics by more efficiently delivering drugs to the target tissues
1622 than ophthalmic drops. Many studies used the drug absorption and release approach
1623 to load antibiotics into commercial contact lenses. As an example, etafilcon A lenses
1624 were bathed in lomefloxacin solution (3mg/ml) and then placed on rabbit eyes.
1625 Compared to hourly lomefloxacin solution, the presoaked lenses delivered a peak
1626 corneal concentration of 213 µg/g at 4 hours, compared to 31 µg/g for hourly drops
1627 at the same time point [213].

1628

1629 In a 10 patient study, HEMA-based lenses were soaked overnight in 0.5 %
1630 commercial gentamicin ophthalmic solution [333]. The contact lenses were worn for
1631 96 hours. The tear film was sampled with paper tear strips at various times over the

1632 4-day study. The concentration of gentamicin in the tear film was calculated indirectly
1633 by using a bioassay that measured the bacterial inhibition zone resulting from tear
1634 strips. The study found that the lenses were well tolerated and that gentamicin tear
1635 levels steadily decreased over the 4 days and remained above the minimum
1636 inhibitory concentration for all of the subjects for up to 3 days [333]. Another study
1637 found that presoaked lenses resulted in higher antibiotic concentrations in the
1638 aqueous humour compared to frequent drop administration [334]. The study
1639 investigated the drug flux from presoaked lenses into the aqueous humour of eyes
1640 that were to undergo cataract surgery. Vifilcon A lenses were loaded in 0.3%
1641 ciprofloxacin ophthalmic solution for 10-12 hours. The lenses were placed on the
1642 eyes of patients at different time points (3, 5-6 and 8-12 hours) prior to cataract
1643 surgery. During the surgery, the aqueous humour was sampled and the
1644 ciprofloxacin concentration measured at various time points. At the 3-hour time point,
1645 the measured ciprofloxacin levels were 3x greater than the maximum levels that
1646 were achieved by frequent administration of 0.3% ciprofloxacin drops [334].

1647

1648 Molecularly imprinted silicone-based contact lenses were loaded with ciprofloxacin
1649 and tested in a rabbit model of *P. aeruginosa* keratitis. Colony forming units in the
1650 cornea that were cultured from the corneas of rabbits that wore ciprofloxacin-loaded
1651 contact lenses were significantly less than lenses that were not loaded with
1652 ciprofloxacin [291]. Implanting contact lenses with moxifloxacin and hyaluronic acid
1653 semicircular rings has also been used to treat experimental bacterial conjunctivitis
1654 [316]. Rabbits wore the contact lenses and had tear fluid concentrations measured
1655 as various time points. Results were compared to a single 0.5% moxifloxacin eye
1656 drop. The contact lenses demonstrated a similar peak concentration as the eye drop,
1657 but a greater duration of release, with moxifloxacin still being detectable after 48
1658 hours of wear.

1659

1660 Several reports exist on the development of poly-epsilon lysine containing bandage
1661 contact lenses which can bind other antimicrobials such as penicillin G, the
1662 antimicrobial peptide Mel4 or amphotericin B and be used to treat both fungal and
1663 microbial keratitis [335-338]. Poly-epsilon lysine is a naturally occurring antimicrobial
1664 peptide that is nontoxic, is used as both an emulsifier and food preservative, and is
1665 classified as “generally regarded as safe” by many regulatory authorities. Contact

1666 lenses made of poly-epsilon lysine have activity against *S. aureus*, *Escherichia coli*,
1667 *P. aeruginosa* and *Candida albicans* in *in vitro* and *ex vivo* models [336, 337].

1668

1669 **5.2.4 Ocular allergy**

1670 Ocular allergy is a pervasive condition that affects 20-40% of the population
1671 worldwide [339, 340]. Allergic conjunctivitis, the most common type of ocular allergy,
1672 is clinically defined as an IgE-mediated hypersensitivity response to exposure of the
1673 ocular surface to one or more allergens including tree or grass pollens, pet dander,
1674 or dust mite dander [339]. Allergic conjunctivitis can have a significant impact on
1675 productivity as well as on quality of life of patients [341, 342].

1676

1677 Currently, in the management of contact lens wearers with ocular allergies, patients
1678 may be encouraged to avoid or minimise lens wear due to an increase in contact
1679 lens-related discomfort [343]. Unfortunately, the concomitant use of topical anti-
1680 allergy eyedrops during contact lens wear is not advised, as the preservatives from
1681 the drops may be irritating to the ocular surface [343]. Furthermore, because the
1682 primary symptom of allergic conjunctivitis is itch, patients who naturally (and often,
1683 unconsciously) respond to ocular itch with eye-rubbing may cause both an
1684 exacerbation of their allergic symptoms and potentially risk damage to both their
1685 ocular surface and their lenses [344, 345]. An anti-allergic releasing contact lenses
1686 may also prove effective via two complementary mechanisms of action; while
1687 simultaneously delivering medication to the eye, the contact lenses may also act as
1688 a physical barrier to protect the ocular surface against airborne environmental
1689 allergens [346].

1690

1691 *In vitro* uptake and release studies evaluated the behaviour of the anti-allergy agents
1692 cromolyn sodium and ketotifen fumarate in commercially available hydrogel and
1693 silicone hydrogel materials [206]. Cromolyn sodium demonstrated a very rapid
1694 uptake and release across all lens materials, which was attributed to the relatively
1695 small size of the molecule and the relatively high water content of the lenses. In
1696 contrast, ketotifen fumarate demonstrated a much more gradual uptake and release
1697 profile and displayed some degree of sustained drug release. Ketotifen fumarate
1698 also showed a statistically significantly higher uptake and release in ionic versus

1699 non-ionic lens materials, in hydrogel vs. silicone hydrogel lenses, and in higher water
1700 content versus lower water content lenses [206].

1701

1702 A subsequent set of *in vitro* experiments further established how both the chemical
1703 nature of the drug and the material characteristics of the lens influence the drug
1704 uptake and release [205]. In these experiments, 14 commercially available lens
1705 formulations were soaked in ketotifen fumarate and then drug uptake and release
1706 was measured. While all lenses were able to uptake and release ketotifen fumarate,
1707 the FDA group IV (ionic) materials showed the greatest uptake within the group of
1708 conventional hydrogel lenses tested. The only ionic silicone hydrogel evaluated,
1709 balafilcon A, also demonstrated the greatest uptake of ketotifen fumarate within the
1710 silicone hydrogel lenses tested. These ionic lens materials also showed significantly
1711 more drug release over time, but the drug release plateau occurred after only 2-4
1712 hours. These data reinforced that the ionic charge of the contact lens material plays
1713 a key role in the uptake and release of ketotifen [205].

1714

1715 To better control the uptake of drugs by different lens materials (as well as prolong
1716 the duration of drug release), researchers have explored a variety of alternative
1717 technologies beyond simply soaking preformed materials.

1718

- 1719 • Molecular imprinting was used to load olopatadine into contact lenses and the
1720 uptake and release was modified using a combination of various monomers
1721 within the polymeric network, which result in a range of binding affinities with
1722 the drug. Several formulations demonstrated *in vitro* efficacy by inhibiting the
1723 release of histamine from cultured mast cells [288], while the consistent
1724 extended release of ketotifen fumarate from molecularly imprinted contact
1725 lenses has also been shown *in vivo* in New Zealand white rabbits [301].
- 1726 • Drug loaded micro/nanoparticles have been used to attempt to sustain anti-
1727 allergy drug release from a polymer [347].
- 1728 • Research incorporating ketotifen-containing microemulsions as well as silica
1729 shell nanoparticles into hydrogel contact lenses that were formulated using
1730 those same microemulsions demonstrated 9 days of ketotifen release *in vivo*,

1731 while also having high optical transparency, good lens surface wettability and
1732 acceptable preclinical testing results [242].

1733

1734 Multiple clinical trials evaluating ketotifen-releasing contact lenses have been
1735 registered and include two safety studies [348, 349] in healthy normal volunteers and
1736 two evaluations of efficacy and safety [350, 351]. A review of the patent literature
1737 suggests that for these studies, the soak method may have been used to incorporate
1738 ketotifen into an FDA group IV hydrogel material (etafilcon A) post-polymerisation but
1739 prior to sterilisation [352]. The two efficacy studies reported the use of etafilcon A
1740 lenses with 19 µg of ketotifen as compared to etafilcon A lenses with no added drug
1741 (control). The studies utilised the conjunctival allergen challenge (CAC) model, which
1742 has been validated over many clinical trials and is an established standard for FDA
1743 approval of ophthalmic anti-allergy drugs. A combined total of 244 subjects were
1744 enrolled and, in both studies, the mean ocular itching scores in the eyes wearing the
1745 ketotifen-releasing contact lenses was significantly lower than the eyes wearing the
1746 control lenses for all time points. Between the two studies, there were 24 ocular
1747 adverse events reported in a total of 488 eyes (4.9%), with the majority of them
1748 being classified as mild in severity and not study related [353].

1749

1750 Thus, the results to-date would suggest that a commercially viable anti-allergy
1751 contact lens delivery device could be a valuable addition to the methods available to
1752 clinicians to manage allergic eye disease.

1753

1754 **5.3 Potential future ocular drug delivery technologies**

1755 While novel technologies have been developed to improve sustained drug release
1756 from contact lenses, the overall release mechanism generally still depends on
1757 diffusion kinetics [198, 246]. The use of on-demand drug delivery systems or “smart”
1758 intelligent materials that release drugs in response to various stimuli offer innovative
1759 tools to control drug release [246, 354, 355].

1760

1761 **5.3.1 Light-mediated release**

1762 Light-activated drug delivery systems have an advantage when it comes to ocular
 1763 applications, as the eye is the only organ through which light can easily pass. These
 1764 photoresponsive systems can be broadly classified into three groups (Table 5).

1765

1766 Table 5: Summary of photosensitive systems for drug delivery

Types of systems	Mechanism	Representative photo compounds
Photochemical	Photocleavage of the bond between polymer and drug	<i>o</i> -nitrobenzyl, coumarin, pyrene [354, 356]
Isomerization	Light-induced transition between on-off states	azobenzene, spiropyran [354, 356, 357]
Photothermal	Light-induced thermal reaction which causes drug release	gold nanoparticles, poly (N-isopropylacrylamide) (PNIPAAm) as a thermo-responsive polymer [354]

1767

1768 For photochemical drug delivery materials, exposure to light is sufficient to
 1769 irreversibly cleave the covalent bonds between the material and the drug. Commonly
 1770 used photolabile groups for these applications include derivatives of *o*-nitrobenzyl,
 1771 coumarin, or pyrene [354, 356]. In photoisomerization, the light exposure causes
 1772 reversible conformational changes, which transitions the material between an “on”
 1773 and “off” state. Azobenzene and spiropyran derivatives are commonly employed for
 1774 this application [354, 356, 357]. For photothermal systems, thermal energy or heat is
 1775 produced when the material is photoexcited. These systems are composed of two
 1776 elements, a chromophore that is able to convert light energy to heat and a
 1777 thermoresponsive polymer [354]. Gold nanoparticles are widely used as a
 1778 chromophore for this application as they are inert, non-toxic and exhibit tuneable
 1779 optical and photothermal properties [354]. A well known thermoresponsive polymer

1780 is poly (N-isopropylacrylamide), which transitions between reversible states; it is a
1781 hydrophobic polymer at low temperatures (entrapping drugs) and a swollen hydrogel
1782 at higher temperatures (releasing drugs) [354].

1783

1784 Potential limitations of such systems relate to the wavelength of light required for
1785 activation. Ultraviolet light is highly energetic, whereas near infrared light is
1786 energetically weak but can easily penetrate tissues [354]. Most of the light-
1787 responsive drug delivery systems require energy in the UV spectrum or high-energy
1788 visible light to work [354]. This is problematic, since prolonged exposure to UV light
1789 can damage the eye [358, 359] and near infrared exposure has been linked to the
1790 development of cataracts [359].

1791

1792 To date, there are no FDA approved light-activated systems for drug delivery [354].
1793 Concerns include how to control the amounts of drugs released when exposed to
1794 varying levels of light. For instance, there would be significant differences in the
1795 doses released for people who spend the majority of their time indoors compared to
1796 those wearing their lenses primarily outdoors. Nonetheless, considering that a light-
1797 adaptive photochromic contact lens (Acuvue Oasys with Transitions Light Intelligent
1798 Technology; Johnson & Johnson) has been FDA approved, variations of light
1799 mediated drug release contact lenses may become a commercial reality.

1800

1801 **5.3.2 Temperature triggered release**

1802 Thermoresponsive polymers, which alternate between two reversible states in
1803 response to changes in temperature, have been widely employed as smart materials
1804 for a number of applications [360]. This is advantageous for on-demand drug
1805 delivery systems, whereby the systems can be controlled using an “on-off”
1806 temperature. For biomedical applications, the activation temperature typically ranges
1807 between 25°C to 37°C, corresponding to ambient temperature and body
1808 temperatures, respectively [361]. The underlying mechanism involves changes in the
1809 miscibility of their polymer chains in aqueous solution at various temperatures [361].
1810 The transition temperature at which these changes occur is defined as the lower
1811 critical solution temperature or the upper critical solution temperature. Below the
1812 lower critical solution temperature threshold, the polymer chains are hydrophilic and
1813 miscible in solution, the gel is hydrated and swells. Above the lower critical solution

1814 temperature, the chains begin to aggregate, resulting in phase separation, the gel
1815 becomes hydrophobic, expels its water and dissolved contents and changes its
1816 properties [361-363]. The opposite effect is observed for upper critical solution
1817 temperature , whereby cooling the temperature results in phase separation [361].
1818 The majority of thermo-responsive polymers are lower critical solution temperature-
1819 types, one of the most popular being derivatives of poly (N-isopropylacrylamide),
1820 which can be copolymerised with polymers such as HEMA and readily adapted into
1821 contact lens-viable materials [362-366].

1822

1823 **5.3.3 Enzyme triggered release**

1824 Enzymatic triggered drug release only occurs in the presence of a set concentration
1825 of a specific enzyme. The human tear film contains a relatively high concentration of
1826 protein compared to other body fluids, with lysozyme, lactoferrin, albumin, lipocalin
1827 and lipophilin comprising the majority of the proteins found in basal tears [367].
1828 Chitosan-poly (acrylic acid) nanoparticles were developed and demonstrated a
1829 breakdown and decrease in particle size in the presence of lysozyme [368]. These
1830 nanoparticles were then incorporated into polyvinyl alcohol-based contact lenses
1831 before being immersed in solutions containing lysozyme at physiological
1832 concentrations [368]. The nanoparticles were then released from the lenses over the
1833 course of 28 hours, which did not occur in the absence of lysozyme. The authors
1834 proposed that the nanoparticles can serve as vehicles for drugs, which could then be
1835 released by lysozyme degradation [368].

1836

1837 Another study utilised diamond nanogel embedded contact lenses. Nanodiamond
1838 particles were formed into nanogels containing timolol and coated with chitosan,
1839 which were then incorporated into the matrix of HEMA-based contact lens materials
1840 [369]. Degradation of the chitosan by lysozyme exposure led to the release of timolol
1841 from the nanodiamond particle. The timolol was shown to be biologically active,
1842 demonstrating that the encapsulation process and enzymatic release from the
1843 particle did not adversely affect the drug [369].

1844

1845 **6 Antimicrobial contact lenses**

1846

1847 Microbial adhesion to contact lenses is a risk factor for developing microbial keratitis,
1848 contact lens acute red eye and contact lens peripheral ulcers [370]. These adverse
1849 events occur more frequently with lenses worn on an extended wear schedule
1850 compared to those worn on a daily wear basis. It is estimated that as many as 1 in
1851 500 wearers per year will develop microbial keratitis while using extended wear
1852 contact lenses [371-373]. Reduction in bacterial adhesion to contact lenses using
1853 antimicrobial coatings/treatments could thus be a viable means of reducing these
1854 potentially sight threatening complications. For these types of antibacterial contact
1855 lenses to be viable, several criteria should be considered:

1856

- 1857 • Efficacy against a broad spectrum of microbes implicated in contact lens-
1858 related infection and inflammation, including Gram-positive and Gram-negative
1859 bacteria
- 1860 • Ability to maintain efficacy after exposure to the eye and potential lens cleaning
1861 regimes
- 1862 • Biocompatibility with the ocular tissue
- 1863 • Stability under typical contact lens sterilization and storage conditions
- 1864 • Scalable synthesis process and required lens properties

1865

1866 The addition of silver or the use of antimicrobial peptides has received the greatest
1867 attention for this application. The CLEAR - contact lens wettability, cleaning,
1868 disinfection and interactions with tears report [374] reports more fully on the details
1869 of antimicrobial lenses. An overview only is given in this section.

1870

1871 Several contact lens manufacturers, including CIBA Vision (now Alcon), Sauflon
1872 (now CooperVision) and Marietta Vision (Marietta, GA, USA) have already
1873 incorporated silver into contact lens storage cases to prevent microbial
1874 contamination [375]. Silver integrated by various means into contact lens materials is
1875 effective at reducing colonisation by *P. aeruginosa*, *S. aureus* and *Acanthamoeba*
1876 *castellanii* [375-377]. However, it has also been noted that silver can be cytotoxic if
1877 released from the contact lens polymer [376] and at high concentrations may also
1878 impact various contact lens properties [378].

1879

1880 Considerable success in fabricating an antimicrobial contact lens has been seen
1881 through incorporation of antimicrobial peptides. The antimicrobial peptides melimine,
1882 Mel4 and Esculentin-1a have been incorporated into lenses either by soaking or via
1883 a covalent linkage using an (1-ethyl-3-(3-dimethylaminopropyl) carbodiimide
1884 hydrochloride) reaction [379-381], or an acrylic plasma coating technique to coat
1885 SiHy contact lens materials (senofilcon A, comfilcon A, somofilcon A, lotrafilcon A
1886 and lotrafilcon B) [382]. In all of the approaches described, the incorporation of the
1887 peptides did not impact contact lens parameters such as diameter, lens thickness,
1888 base curves, wettability, or deposition [381, 382]. These lenses can reduce the
1889 adhesion of several microbes including *P. aeruginosa*, *S. aureus*, *Fusarium solani*
1890 and *A. castellanii* which can cause contact lens-induced microbial keratitis [379-
1891 383]. Mel4-coated lenses are non-toxic in animal eyes and well tolerated in human
1892 trials [384].

1893

1894 Fimbrulides, also known as furanones, are derived from a marine red alga *Delisea*
1895 *pulchra*. They can reduce the adhesion of microbes by inhibiting quorum sensing
1896 and other signalling systems [385-389]. A synthetic fimbrulide coated onto lotrafilcon
1897 A lenses using gas plasma polymerization and reductive amination produced no
1898 notable changes in the lens parameters but was able to reduce adhesion of *P.*
1899 *aeruginosa*, *S. aureus*, *Serratia marcescens* and *Acanthamoeba* sp. [390]. These
1900 lenses were generally well tolerated in animal models or humans although it was
1901 noted that the volunteer subjects reported a higher degree of lens-awareness for the
1902 fimbrulide-coated contact lenses [390].

1903

1904

1905 Microbial adhesion can occur on contact lens surfaces that have been coated by the
1906 tear film during wear [370]. For example, the deposition of albumin on lenses
1907 modulates bacterial adhesion [391]. Lenses that are resistant to tear film deposition,
1908 or biofouling, may therefore also show some degree of resistance to microbial
1909 contamination. A clinical study has shown that the incorporation of poly(ethylene
1910 oxide) on lotrafilcon A can reduce the biofouling of contact lenses by the tear film
1911 [392]. It may be beneficial in the future to explore other biomaterials that are resistant
1912 to biofouling as another strategy to develop antimicrobial contact lens materials.

1913

1914

1915 7 Theranostics

1916 Theranostics is a multi-disciplinary field of medicine that combines therapeutics and
1917 diagnostics. This rapidly growing area has produced new avenues of research,
1918 facilitating discoveries in disease mechanisms as well as drug and medical device
1919 development. Theranostics applies knowledge and techniques from nanotechnology,
1920 molecular and nuclear medicine, as well as pharmacogenetics, to achieve such
1921 tasks as *in vitro* diagnostics and prognostics, *in vivo* molecular imaging and therapy
1922 and targeted drug delivery [393]. Its personalised approach to medicine has enabled
1923 patient care to shift from defensive towards offensive strategies and from more
1924 traditional trial-and-error towards predictive treatments [394].

1925

1926 Potential theranostic contact lenses can be combined with currently available
1927 sensing technology and microfabrication techniques. These smart lenses would
1928 release appropriate therapeutics based on input from continuous monitoring
1929 methods, which would traditionally require invasive procedures for device placement.
1930 This emerging field has thus far produced relatively few papers, but theranostic
1931 contact lenses have been proposed for the detection and/or management of dry eye,
1932 glaucoma and diabetes.

1933

1934 7.1.1 Dry eye detection and management

1935 There is growing interest in the changes in biomarkers on the ocular surface in DED,
1936 with particular focus on tear proteases such as MMP-9 and protease inhibitors [367].
1937 Utilisation of a facile surface nanoengineering method on the surface of a contact
1938 lens could allow continuous monitoring of MMP-9 levels through a similar method as
1939 a commercially available PoC immunoassay (InflammaDry, Quidel, San Diego, CA)
1940 [367]. The inherent enzymatic activity of MMP-9 could be harnessed to enzymatically
1941 stimulate release of appropriate drugs to the ocular surface when their levels are
1942 elevated.

1943

1944 7.1.2 Glaucoma detection and management

1945 IOP contact lens-based sensors for glaucoma monitoring have been widely studied
1946 [94, 97, 105]. The Sensimed Triggerfish contact lens utilises an embedded strain
1947 gauge within a contact lens attached to a processing unit and radiofrequency

1948 transmission unit to report information to a receiver worn around the patient's neck
1949 [395] (see section 3.1.1). Given this application, it is relatively easy to envision a lens
1950 which combines this detection technology with a drug release technology, so that an
1951 increase in IOP triggers a tailored amount of a drug to be released to maintain
1952 pressure within a set of parameters. Given the mechanical nature of IOP detection
1953 with the Triggerfish, drug release could potentially also be tied to this change in
1954 physical property.

1955

1956 7.1.3 **Diabetic retinopathy detection and management**

1957 Glucose monitoring sensors for contact lenses, which measure concentrations of
1958 glucose and lactate in tear fluid, have been proposed (see section 2.1) [38, 54, 396,
1959 397] . These devices may use a number of sensing principles, including
1960 fluorescence, holographic, electrochemical sensing and colloidal crystal array [398].

1961

1962 A recent study has taken steps to expand diagnostic and sensing contact lens
1963 technology to include therapeutic elements. Electrically controlled drug delivery with
1964 a smart contact lens device has been described [399]. Flexible, ultra-thin electrical
1965 circuits and a microcontroller were embedded on a biocompatible polymer and
1966 achieved continuous glucose monitoring and drug delivery for diabetic retinopathy in
1967 rabbit models. Tear glucose levels were continuously monitored, which enabled
1968 triggered release of drugs from treatment reservoirs. The success of this device was
1969 made possible through the use of soft bioelectronics and a recently developed
1970 semiconductor implantable drug delivery device [399, 400].

1971

1972 Contact lens theranostics will likely expand in the coming decade due to recent
1973 advances in contact lens drug delivery innovations and those in the field of smart
1974 contact lens sensing. Future theranostic contact lenses will go beyond merely
1975 sensors in the contact lens itself but include both sensing and drug delivery.
1976 However, the sensors that would provide the feedback for triggering drug delivery
1977 will likely be located outside the contact lens as it may not be feasible for them to be
1978 embedded into the same contact lens platform that delivers the drug itself.

1979 **8 Optical Enhancements**

1980 **8.1 Customised optics for aberrated or diseased eyes**

1981 Aberrations within the eye are categorised as low order and higher order, with low
1982 order aberrations being those corrected with conventional optical corrections.

1983 Corneal pathology, such as keratoconus, creates significant amounts of higher order
1984 aberrations and spectacle lenses are unable to correct the aberrations created by
1985 the ectatic cornea. A standard soft contact lens simply drapes over the distorted
1986 shape and is unable to correct the high order aberrations, although customised soft
1987 contact lenses have been developed in an attempt to correct these [401, 402]. A rigid
1988 contact lens could be used, as the tear lens between the contact lens and cornea
1989 neutralises the irregular shape, creating a uniform refracting surface [403, 404].

1990

1991 Measurement and correction of high order aberrations have become more
1992 commonplace since the development of customised refractive surgery options that
1993 attempt to optimise vision correction during the surgical process, by reducing high
1994 order aberrations through individualised ablation of the corneal tissue [405-407].
1995 Several studies have reported the aberrations that occur with the wearing of
1996 spherical, toric or multifocal contact lenses in normal eyes [404, 408, 409]. The
1997 simplest approach to attempt to reduce aberrations induced by contact lens wear is
1998 to include an aspheric surface that is designed to reduce overall aberrations based
1999 on the population average, or for the average human eye, particularly spherical
2000 aberration [410-413]. While reducing high order aberrations is believed to improve
2001 overall visual quality for the wearer, the amount of change in high order aberrations
2002 that is clinically detectable differs between patients [414]. As wavefront measures of
2003 high order aberrations are limited to monochromatic light [415] and high order
2004 aberrations may vary due to blinking, tear film changes, varying pupil size and
2005 contact lens decentration, ensuring that lenses remain highly wettable and retain a
2006 stable tear film over their front surface may well have a greater visual impact than
2007 correcting high order aberrations [416].

2008

2009 The addition of corneal topography to laser vision correction means that a laser
2010 profile can be added to the patient's unique corneal shape, with the option of
2011 reducing high order aberrations during the surgical procedure. An extension of this

2012 concept has made its way into contact lens design for highly aberrated eyes, with the
2013 front surface of the lens being manufactured to specifically reduce the measured
2014 aberrations that occur with the lens in situ [417-419]. The future for this concept will
2015 likely result in an improvement in custom-made lenses for corneal irregularities such
2016 as keratoconus [402, 420], particularly in scleral lenses or mini-scleral designs,
2017 where the lens is more stable and aberration control becomes easier to achieve
2018 [421, 422].

2019

2020 **8.2 Accommodative contact lenses for presbyopia**

2021 It is estimated that presbyopia affects 1.8 billion people globally [423] and, as the
2022 world's population ages, this figure will rise substantially. Although a number of
2023 approaches have been considered to treat the crystalline lens in presbyopia, for
2024 example, chemical softening, optical strategies remain the mainstay of management
2025 and some novel options for contact lens management have been proposed.

2026

2027 There are two fundamental problems that must be solved in designing an
2028 accommodative contact lenses. The first challenge is to be able to continually track
2029 the user's gaze or monitor the viewing distance, while the second is to actively
2030 control the focal length of the optical element [424, 425]. The optimal
2031 accommodating contact lenses should be able to transition between near and
2032 distance focus based on the patient's gaze and should be capable of producing at
2033 least +2.00 additional diopters of power for near vision [425].

2034

2035 **8.2.1 Mechanically accommodating lenses for presbyopia**

2036 Two methods of using the gaze position as a mechanical control of the optics of the
2037 lens have been proposed. In the first example, the accommodative contact lens
2038 utilises contact with the eyelids to provide additional dioptric power. In the normal
2039 state, the contact lens provides a single dioptric power for distance vision. When
2040 eyelid pressure is applied, the contact lens is squeezed and lifted from the surface of
2041 the eye and, as a result, the shape of the lens and the tear film underneath causes a
2042 change in dioptric power [426]. In the second example, the contact lens uses fluid
2043 flow within the bulk of the material to change optical power [427]. When the eye
2044 moves downwards, the lower eyelid presses against the lens, which causes liquid at

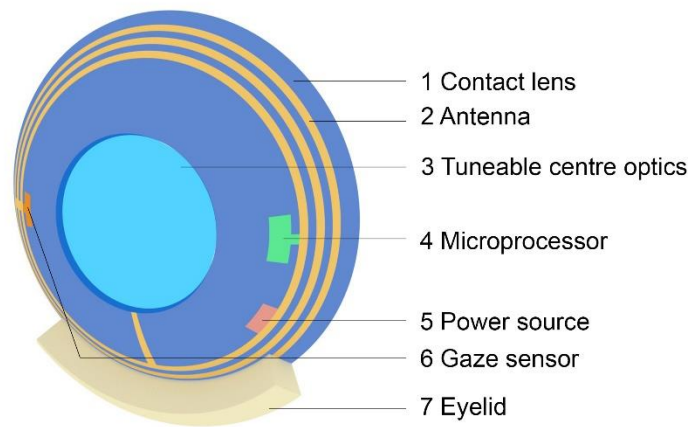
2045 the bottom of the lens to flow into the centre. This fluid movement changes the
2046 optical power of the lens from distance to near focus [427, 428].

2047

2048 **8.2.2 Electronic accommodative or ‘tuneable’ contact lenses**

2049 The most ambitious method for an automatically accommodating contact lens
2050 proposes to embed microelectronics on a contact lens to control accommodation. In
2051 this type of system, the gaze is monitored using a capacitive sensor that determines
2052 the gaze direction of the cornea based on changes in capacitance [429]. These
2053 changes are detected in real-time, which is then used to control the optical element
2054 [429]. The gaze information from both eyes can also be sent to an external device for
2055 more refined processing and control [430]. A schematic of a proposed electronic
2056 presbyopic contact lens is shown in Figure 3. Similar to other smart contact lens
2057 designs, the optical components must also be supported by a power source [431,
2058 432] and an antenna [433, 434] to function.

2059



2060

2061 Figure 3: Schematic design of an electronic presbyopic contact lens [425]. The
2062 sensor monitors (6) the gaze and sends the information to a microprocessor (4),
2063 which controls the tuneable centre optics (3). The optics can be tuned using a
2064 responsive polymer [435] or liquid crystals [424, 425, 436]. The entire system is
2065 supported by a power source (5) and an antenna (2).

2066

2067 There are several ways that the optical elements can be controlled to induce
2068 changes in optical power; although many of these suggestions are patent filings
2069 alone and their functionality for correction of presbyopia is yet to be determined in
2070 clinical studies. A number of patents and patent applications describe the use of
2071 electroactive materials or elements (also referred to as accommodation actuators)
2072 that can change shape or be used to change shape, and thus refractive power, in
2073 response to a signal [435, 437]. In addition to the electroactive elements or
2074 materials, the contact lens system incorporates a view or gaze detection mechanism,
2075 a controller/actuator (such as a chip or an integrated circuit), an embedded battery
2076 and an external power source [437-441].

2077

2078 With respect to the electroactive elements or materials, they may be localised to the
2079 optic zone or embedded in the anterior or posterior segment of the contact lens
2080 [435]. In another example, fluids in a reservoir inside the lens can be circulated from
2081 the periphery of the lens to the centre using an electro-mechanical pump on the lens,
2082 which causes a change in shape and refractive power [428].

2083

2084 Another approach proposes the use of liquid crystals, which are best known for their
2085 applications in liquid crystal displays such as television or computer screens. Liquid
2086 crystals naturally form long rods that generally point in the same direction [442]. The
2087 positioning of these rods can be reoriented by a relatively low voltage, reverting to
2088 the original alignment when the electric potential is removed [442]. The changes in
2089 orientation of these rods consequently result in changes in the material's refractive
2090 index, which can be exploited to increase or decrease optical power [424, 425, 436]
2091 and to be configured with the aid of a controller to function as a pinhole, increasing
2092 the depth of focus of light. The overall design of a liquid crystal contact lens consists
2093 of the liquid crystal component sandwiched between two layers of electrodes [146,
2094 425, 443, 444].

2095

2096 It is evident from the innovative technologies described that management of
2097 presbyopia using accommodating contact lenses is of substantial interest and that
2098 the industry may witness some significant developments in presbyopia management
2099 in the not too distant future.

2100

2101 **8.3 Myopia control**

2102 The announcement in November 2019 of the FDA approval for the use of MiSight® 1
2103 day (CooperVision, Pleasanton, CA, USA) for slowing myopia progression in children
2104 was an important milestone in myopia control, by demonstrating the feasibility of
2105 successfully slowing myopia progression and by acknowledging the need to reduce
2106 the risk of the eye becoming highly myopic [445]. In addition to MiSight® 1 day, there
2107 are other contact lenses that are now available in various markets to slow myopia
2108 that are backed by varying degrees of clinical evidence [446, 447]. The reader
2109 should also refer to the CLEAR reports on medical use of contact lenses [143],
2110 orthokeratology [448] and contact lens optics [449] for further information of myopia
2111 control by contact lenses.

2112

2113 Over the past two decades, a number of clinical studies have demonstrated that
2114 contact lenses are able to slow myopia progression in children [450]. The lens
2115 designs that have been assessed incorporate either concentric rings of plus power,
2116 peripheral optical zone(s) with add power and lens designs that incorporate non-
2117 monotonic variations in power, varying in both myopic and hyperopic directions.
2118 However, in spite of these significant advances, contact lens fittings for myopia
2119 control are limited to only about 2-5% of the total contact lens fittings, with single
2120 vision spectacles remaining the most popular myopia management modality [451,
2121 452].

2122

2123 One of the reasons for low uptake of soft contact lenses for myopia management
2124 relate to perceptions on efficacy, with soft lenses ranking behind orthokeratology and
2125 pharmaceutical options in terms of perceived efficacy by ECPs worldwide [451, 452].
2126 Despite this, the myopia control field is growing and research considering innovative
2127 and improved approaches to slow myopia is of great interest. Many of these
2128 approaches are related to innovations that appear in patent articles and not in the
2129 scientific literature and, therefore, may be in planning or pre-clinical development
2130 stages. There is interest in considering novel contact lens designs as well as
2131 optimisation of lens designs and considerations of subgroups such as astigmats.
2132 Some of the innovations around lens designs include: lens design with asymmetric
2133 radial power profile that increases from the centre to the margin of the optical zone of

2134 the contact lens [453], non co-axial lenslets [454], a lens with varying peripheral
2135 power and an opaque mask beginning at a radial distances from the centre [455] and
2136 a star shaped or elliptical optical zone to increase peripheral defocus area [456]. It is
2137 not known if any of these designs are being clinically evaluated.

2138
2139 Astigmatism is common and varies with age and ethnicity [457]. The clinical
2140 evidence for myopia control is limited to astigmatism commonly <1D and therefore it
2141 is not clear if these previously mentioned designs can be effectively used for higher
2142 amounts of astigmatism. While studies have been undertaken to investigate this
2143 concept [458], more studies are required. A centre distance toric multifocal contact
2144 lens with free form stabilisation is under consideration for myopia control in children
2145 [459]. Additionally, improvements in terms of refining lens designs (optimised
2146 defocus incorporated soft contact lenses) and multifocal orthokeratology lenses
2147 wherein the back surface design of the lens is designed to create a multifocal shape
2148 on the cornea with alternating zones of flattening and steepening appear to be in
2149 various stages of clinical testing.

2150
2151 Combination strategies are successful if they provide additive or synergistic effects
2152 compared to single strategies and, increasingly, myopia management strategies are
2153 considering combination strategies to improve efficacy. Most commonly, these
2154 approaches have involved using orthokeratology or soft contact lenses in
2155 combination with pharmaceutical approaches. Recent studies found that combining
2156 atropine and orthokeratology contact lenses was more effective in slowing axial
2157 elongation than orthokeratology alone [460-463]. The effect of combining 0.01%
2158 atropine and soft bifocal contact lenses is also under consideration [464]. However,
2159 at this stage, it is not clear if the combination strategy improves efficacy via a
2160 synergistic mechanism or if the two treatment strategies act via different pathways. It
2161 has been suggested that sequential treatment with atropine based therapy during the
2162 period of rapid progression, followed by contact lens wear during the teenage years
2163 is an option [465].

2164
2165 A further novel concept reports an electronic contact lens comprising multiple light
2166 sources coupled to optics which project multiple images anterior to the retina (in
2167 myopic defocus) to decrease progression [466].

2168

2169 **8.4 Sports enhancement**

2170 Contact lenses are commonly advocated for athletes due to their increased field of
2171 view, in sports where spectacles may be easily displaced and for sports where vision
2172 correction methods are prohibited as they may cause injury to other players.

2173

2174 Enhancement of visual performance using contact lenses has primarily centred on
2175 studies using the now discontinued Nike MaxSight amber or grey/green tinted
2176 contact lenses from Bausch + Lomb (Rochester, NY, USA) [467]. Subjectively,
2177 subjects showed a preference for the tinted lenses in comparison to clear ones in
2178 bright light conditions [468-470]. The lenses also allowed for participants to switch
2179 gaze between objects in bright and dark lighting conditions faster and visually
2180 recover more rapidly when moving from dark to bright light [469]. The recent
2181 introduction of photochromic lenses from Johnson & Johnson Vision (Jacksonville,
2182 FL, USA) may fill the gap left by the discontinuation of the MaxSight lenses, but to
2183 date no data on their use in athletes has been published. However, their value in
2184 reducing light scatter and improvements in other vision aspects have been presented
2185 [471-473]. Given the interest within the sports arena to even marginally improve any
2186 aspect of performance that provides a benefit to athletes, further development of
2187 tinted lenses for sports remains an area worthy of pursuit.

2188

2189 **8.5 Low vision enhancements**

2190 Patients with low vision may be visually assisted with the use of a 'contact lens
2191 telescope' [474]. The principles behind this system are that of a Galilean telescope,
2192 which comprises a high negative eyepiece lens and a positive objective lens placed
2193 at a set distance in front of the eyepiece lens. The separation of the two lenses will
2194 affect the magnifying power of the telescope. Applying the same theory to contact
2195 lenses, the high-powered negative eyepiece is the contact lens (for example a -
2196 20DS) and the eye is refracted at the spectacle plane. The neutralising lens will be
2197 approximately +16DS at a back vertex distance of 12mm. The +16DS lens would be
2198 placed at the spectacle plane, as an optical lens glazed into a spectacle frame and
2199 will act as the positive objective lens in this Galilean telescope set up [474, 475]. In

2200 this example, the nominal magnification is only around 20%, but this may be enough
2201 to give the patient a useful functional increase in vision [476]. This concept could be
2202 further adapted with a switchable contact lens telescope system that switches
2203 between normal and magnified vision using polarisation [477].
2204

2205 **8.6 Augmented vision**

2206 Recent advances in augmented reality technologies have provided novel
2207 approaches to digital enhancement of visual function, especially to improve the
2208 mobility and independence of patients with low vision. These advances include
2209 head-mounted devices utilising video see-through displays, in which a magnified or
2210 contrast-enhanced view of the world, captured by real-time outward facing video is
2211 projected on a micro-display in front of the eyes [478, 479].
2212

2213 Approaches to vision augmentation have included selective edge enhancement to
2214 highlight object boundaries and distance enhancements, which displays pixel
2215 brightness based on the distance of points in the visual field [480, 481]. Several
2216 studies have proposed see-through head-mounted displays with varying levels of
2217 success [482-484]. Researchers at Google were among the first to commercialise
2218 such products with Google Glass, a non-medical augmented reality device worn as
2219 spectacles. Google Glass is controlled by vocal commands similar to the functionality
2220 of a hands-free smartphone, as well as a touchpad on the side of the device. The
2221 most up to date iteration is outfitted with an 8 megapixel 80° field of view camera and
2222 a liquid crystal on silicon, field-sequential colour system, light emitting diode (LED)
2223 illuminated display. Amazon and Facebook are reported to be developing their own
2224 head-mounted augmented vision devices, in the form of consumer-friendly smart
2225 glasses [485].
2226

2227 Alongside these avenues, Mojo Vision (Saragota, CA, USA) has proposed a similar
2228 technology in the form of contact lenses. Although the product has yet to reach the
2229 market, the company's plans have been released into the public arena. While many
2230 uses of this new technology have been described, including scrolling information and
2231 text to access personal correspondence, translating languages or aiding with public
2232 speaking, this lens will first be used to help those with severely impaired vision by

2233 providing enhanced image overlays, drawing crisp lines around objects in the user's
2234 view [486]. In one prototype demonstration of the display capabilities, users reported
2235 real-time edge detection, which even highlighted the facial features of others in the
2236 room enough to detect facial expressions in low light [487].

2237

2238 The functionality and wearability of augmented vision contact lenses require the
2239 development of micro-components of the product to assist with motion sensors,
2240 image sensors, wireless power systems and radios, and a high-resolution
2241 microdisplay [487]. The proposed Mojo hexagonal display, which will lie directly in
2242 front of the pupil in the contact lens, is measured at 0.41 mm and contains
2243 approximately 100,000 LEDs in the array. Resting directly on the cornea, the contact
2244 lens and centrally positioned display will be out of the focal plane of the eye and
2245 therefore the opaque micro hexagon will not be imaged on the retina, making it
2246 invisible to the viewer. The micro optic on the display of future augmented vision
2247 contact lenses will project light on the retina. As the eye moves, so will the contact
2248 lens and display, maintaining the visual augmentation across the fovea and near
2249 periphery [488]. In particular, it is the focus of light onto the fovea which will likely
2250 limit visual field requirements, allowing the display to require less light and power to
2251 transmit images [485].

2252

2253 Potential limitations to augmented vision contact lenses include the use of
2254 monochrome displays in the early devices; the highest resolution achieved by
2255 researchers used a green LED array on a complementary metal-oxide-
2256 semiconductor backplane. Additionally, augmented vision contact lenses are likely
2257 not as usable in bright outdoor light conditions, since the contrast is dependent on
2258 the background in which the augmentation is displayed. As ambient light increases,
2259 so does the brightness needed from the display [488].

2260

2261 As medical devices, future augmented vision contact lenses will require approval
2262 from the FDA, and Mojo lenses have been allocated 'breakthrough device' status
2263 [487]. An added zoom feature has also been proposed by the company as an aid for
2264 those with low vision [487].

2265

2266 **9 Contact Lens Packaging**

2267 Microbial keratitis is the most serious complication of contact lens wear, yet its
2268 incidence and associated risks have not changed over decades [372, 489, 490].
2269 Many elements of poor compliance have been linked to microbial keratitis, including
2270 hand hygiene [490-492], and storage case hygiene and replacement [372, 491, 493-
2271 495]. For these reasons, the contact lens storage case and primary blister-pack
2272 packaging, often overlooked, are important elements of contact lens wearing
2273 success.

2274

2275 Soft contact lenses are packaged as sterile medical devices, but once opened and
2276 handled become contaminated and a microbial load can be easily transferred from
2277 the fingers to the lens and into the eye [496]. Thus, efforts have been made to
2278 minimise the amount of handling (and therefore contamination of the contact lens
2279 during the application process) by design of the case and/or application devices.

2280

2281 Almost two decades ago, two patents described methods to insert the lens directly
2282 from the packaging solution without touching the finger; in one case while also
2283 controlling the eyelid position such that lid contamination of the lens with microbes
2284 did not occur during the insertion process. [497, 498]. In a more recent patent, the
2285 inventors describe a disposable lens package that contains a film that adheres to the
2286 surface of the finger which is then used to pick up the contact lens for placement on
2287 the eye [499].

2288

2289 One approach to minimise contamination has been commercialised by Menicon
2290 Company Limited (Nagoya, Japan) in their “flat pack” technology [500]. In this
2291 package, which is approximately 1-mm thick, the lens is compressed in a small
2292 amount of solution (~0.2ml) between two layers of foil, that when separated, allows
2293 the lens to “pop up” into a hemispherical shape, with the outer lens surface
2294 presenting. The lens can easily be manipulated onto a clean finger and applied to
2295 the eye with high confidence that the inner surface that comes into contact with the
2296 cornea has not been contaminated. Simulated tests of bacterial adherence using 3-
2297 5µm PMMA beads or bacterial adherence of *S. aureus* to lenses removed from the
2298 flat pack compared to lenses removed from more conventional blister packages

2299 found contamination was reduced on the flat pack lenses [501]. This has particular
2300 relevance for single use lenses, as contaminated fingers are likely to be the main
2301 route of transferring bacteria to the eye using this wearing modality.

2302

2303 **10 Storage Cases**

2304 Contact lens storage cases have been implicated in microbial keratitis involving
2305 bacteria, fungi and *Acanthamoeba* [372, 493, 494, 502-505]. A population
2306 attributable risk model of microbial keratitis predicts that disease load in daily wear
2307 reusable lenses could be reduced by almost two thirds by merely attending to
2308 storage case hygiene and storage case replacement [494]. Thus, efforts to minimise
2309 the negative impact of the contact lens case should remain a priority.

2310

2311 **10.1 Increasing case replacement frequency**

2312 A new storage case can become contaminated by single isolated bacterial colonies
2313 after as few as 7 days of use, with microcolonies seen at 14 days and mature
2314 biofilms and heavy contamination by 30 days [506]. Upwards of 80% of cases can be
2315 contaminated after two weeks of use [507]. Methods to remind wearers to replace
2316 their cases have been attempted by building reminder systems into the case itself
2317 [508-510], and while some have been marketed, uptake has been minimal. There
2318 are also patents in the area of controlled obsolescence [511], but these have not
2319 been commercialised. However, until daily disposability becomes the only option,
2320 methods to encourage case replacement should be pursued.

2321

2322 **10.2 Reducing case contamination levels**

2323 Biofilms within cases have been linked to contact lens-related corneal disease [512].
2324 One strategy to control microbial adhesion and biofilm formation is to use silver in
2325 the lens case. The first silver-impregnated contact lens case (called Microblock or
2326 Proguard, CIBA Vision Inc., Atlanta, GA, USA) was approved by the FDA in 2005.
2327 Ionic silver is mixed into the plastic during the moulding step, ensuring an even
2328 distribution of silver throughout [513]. When used in conjunction with a multipurpose
2329 disinfecting solution, silver ions slowly leached from the Microblock case material to
2330 prevent bacterial growth. A comparison of the Microblock silver-containing case to

2331 non-silver cases in an *in vitro* study showed that the number of recovered colonies
2332 from the silver-impregnated case inoculated with Gram-positive and Gram-negative
2333 bacterial strains was significantly lower than that recovered from conventional cases
2334 [513]. Another *in vitro* study compared the efficacy of Microblock silver cases to i-
2335 clean (Sauflon Pharmaceuticals Ltd., London, UK) and Nano-case (Marietta
2336 Vision) silver lenses, and to control non-silver cases for *P. aeruginosa*, *S. aureus*, *S.*
2337 *marcescens*, *S. maltophilia*, *Delftia acidovorans*, *C. albicans* and *F. solanii* [514].
2338 Significant antimicrobial activity for most bacteria was found for the Microblock case
2339 but only after incubation with the bacteria for 24 hours; there was usually no
2340 significant activity if incubated for 6 or 10 hours. The i-clean case only had significant
2341 antimicrobial activity for *S. aureus* usually after 24 hours incubation. No silver
2342 containing lens case was active against *F. solanii* and Microblock was the only case
2343 active against *C. albicans* but even that showed a low but significant level of activity
2344 [514]. Another study using a barrel-shaped silver case (Sauflon) was able to show
2345 activity after only 6 hours incubation using a variety of Gram-positive and Gram-
2346 negative bacteria [515]. Further investigation of silver lens cases showed that
2347 preconditioning the lens case with multipurpose disinfecting solution increased the
2348 antimicrobial activity for the Microblock case but not i-clean [516]. Two studies have
2349 shown that incorporating a wipe step in lens case hygiene improves the removal of
2350 bacteria from silver lens cases [516, 517]

2351

2352 However, clinical studies examining contamination with MicroBlock and conventional
2353 cases found that more than 70% of the storage cases used for a month were
2354 contaminated, whether silver-containing or not [518]. Although the silver-
2355 impregnated cases were colonised by reduced levels of Gram-negative bacteria, this
2356 did not result in a significant reduction in adverse events over the course of the
2357 study. Another study using a barrel-shaped silver lens case (Sauflon) found that
2358 when this was used in conjunction with SiHy lenses there was a significant reduction
2359 in the numbers of microbes (mostly bacteria) from silver cases compared to non-
2360 silver barrel-shaped cases, but if hydrogel lenses were used there was an increase
2361 in the number of microbes from silver barrel-shaped cases [519]. Thus, while *in vitro*
2362 data has generally shown reduced contamination, the reduction may take greater
2363 than 10 hours with some cases and clinical trials have struggled to show significant
2364 clinical benefits when silver cases are used.

2365

2366 Selenium has also been studied as a potential additive to contact lens cases.

2367 Organoselenium completely inhibited biofilm formation by several organisms and the

2368 inhibitory properties were retained against *S. aureus* even after 8 weeks soaking in

2369 phosphate buffered saline [520]. Organoselenium kills bacteria by the catalytic

2370 generation of superoxide radicals in the solution and does not have to elute from the

2371 case (like silver), leaving the concentration constant over the life of the case.

2372

2373 Passive surface modifications that hinder microbial adhesion may also help reduce

2374 the risk of microbial keratitis. Surface modified silica nanoparticles, chemically

2375 grafted with UV crosslinkable acrylates and PEG groups were coated onto

2376 polypropylene cases to form an anti-fouling coating [521, 522]. The result was an

2377 approximate 10-fold reduction in the adhesive forces of 9 bacterial strains, including

2378 *Pseudomonas, staphylococci* and *Serratia*.

2379

2380 **10.3 Sensing of contact lens and case contamination**

2381 Bacterial detection is not only an issue for the contact lens field, with areas such as

2382 dental hygiene and wound care also concerned with detecting and characterising

2383 microbial load. In these fields, technology is currently under development to detect

2384 bacterial contamination. The development of a peptide-graphene nanosensor to

2385 allow 'on tooth' monitoring of bacterial detection in saliva has been described [523].

2386 These compact sensors are around 50 μm thick and can be externally powered,

2387 highlighting the potential for integration within a contact lens. Such technology would

2388 allow the contact lens to be monitored for microbial contamination, prompting lens

2389 removal and disinfection/disposal, if a high bacterial load was detected.

2390

2391 Contact lens case contamination is commonplace [507, 518, 524]. To address this

2392 issue, a small real-time sensing device embedded within a contact lens case which

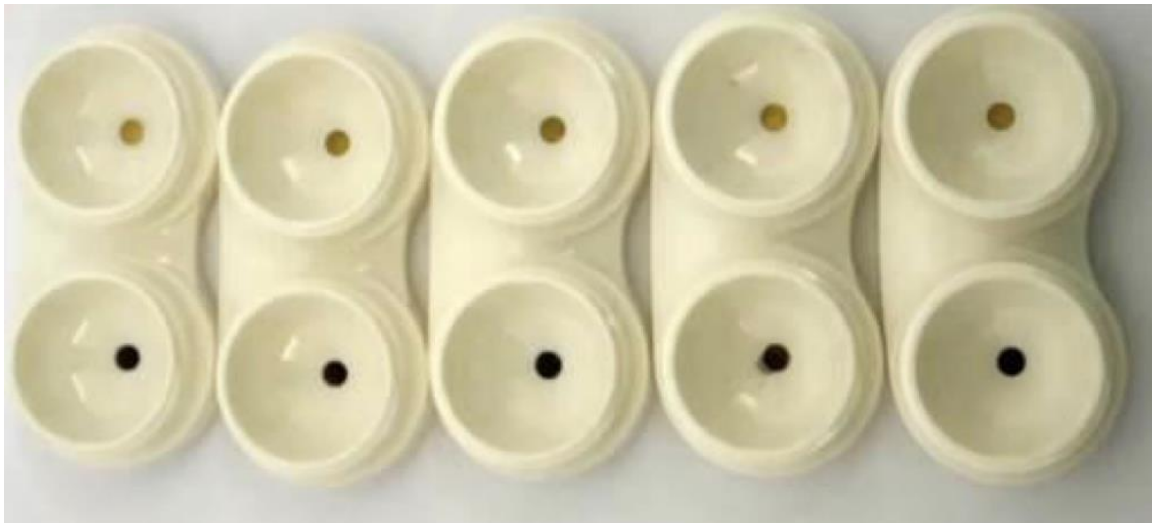
2393 undergoes a colour change to signal the presence of abnormally high levels of

2394 bacteria has been described (Figure 4) [525]. The sensor was embedded into a

2395 contact lens case and contained tetrazolium dye, which changed colour from yellow

2396 to blue when the bacterial level reached over a million counts in 1ml of solution. This

2397 type of technology readily allows the contact lens user to see microbial case
2398 contamination which would otherwise not be apparent, prompting case replacement.
2399



2400
2401 Figure 4. Microbiosensor in a contact lens case with the bottom blue colour
2402 indicating microbial contamination [525].
2403

2404 The presence of a biofilm within a contact lens case has also been shown to
2405 increase the risk of both microbial keratitis and infiltrative keratitis [496]. As biofilms
2406 are typically not visible to the naked eye, a method to identify the presence of the
2407 biofilm is needed. To address this issue, a colourimetric biosensor has been
2408 developed to detect biofilms on the surface of a contact lens case [526, 527]. Gold
2409 nanoparticles are immobilised on the case surface to form the biosensor, where
2410 biofilm formation results in an increase in refractive index and an associated visible
2411 colour change from blue to purple, which is visible to the user, prompting lens case
2412 disposal.

2413

2414 Given the well-known links between case contamination and microbial keratitis,
2415 methods to instruct the wearer to replace a contaminated case or lenses prior to
2416 clinical complications occurring would seem worthy technologies to pursue.

2417

2418 **11 Conclusion**

2419 This review demonstrates the incredible diversity of new technologies under
2420 development that will shape the future for contact lenses. The rapid growth in novel

2421 biomaterials and, in particular, the development of powered contact lenses through
2422 advancements in nanotechnology will enable the commercialisation of lenses that
2423 can both detect and treat ocular and, in some cases, systemic disease. Novel optical
2424 designs will help manage common ocular conditions such as myopia and
2425 presbyopia, in addition to providing enhanced vision for patients with low vision and
2426 corneal conditions such as keratoconus. Improvements in biosensing and
2427 antibacterial surfaces will produce safer contact lens cases and materials, reducing
2428 the numbers of patients who develop sight threatening microbial keratitis and
2429 infiltrative responses.

2430

2431 Contact lenses have been around for over 100 years and their future remains bright,
2432 with many exciting developments under consideration.

2433

2434 **12 Acknowledgements**

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2436 Willcox in supplying background materials for some sections of this paper.

2437

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2443 microbial presence

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